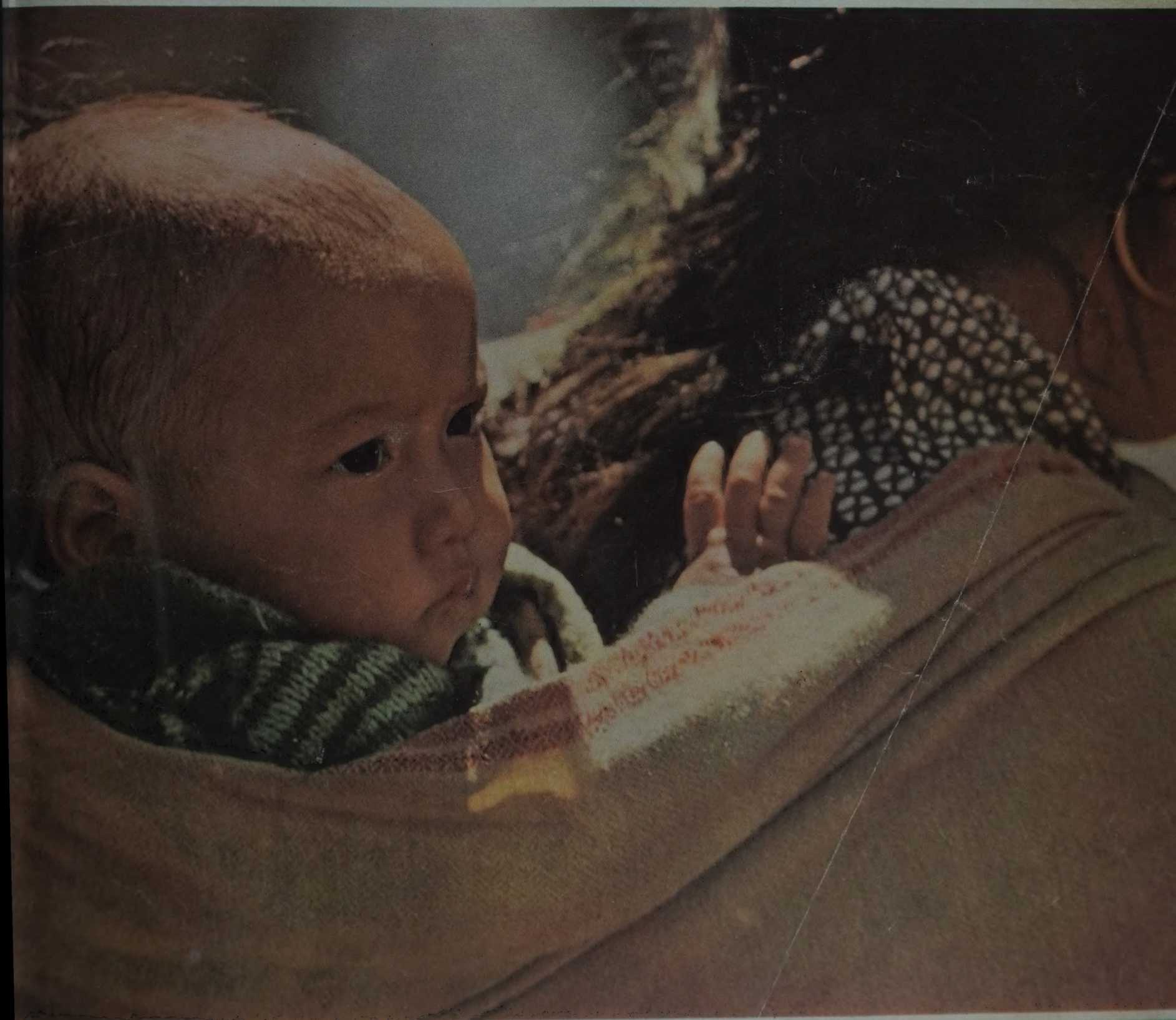


DECEMBER 23 — 29, 1978

RS. 2.50

# Eve's Weekly

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SPECIAL ISSUE

**DEDICATED TO THE CHILD**



As cool, bright  
and beautiful as  
the happy days  
that dissolve into  
a haze of  
golden memories.



**Khatau**  
**TERKOSA**  
100% 'Terene' Sarees

extension of  
mother's  
love...



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**Childcare®**

Mother's love finds expression and fulfillment with our products. They supplement the tender care, protection and comfort only a mother can give. And this extension we called Childcare. Now Childcare have brought out four new products to make your baby smile. The main ingredient is love.



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A nappy disinfectant, CHILD CARE NAPPY-PURE helps avoid nappy rash. It contains ingredients which are efficient bactericidals and germicidals. They reach deeper, where ordinary soap-water may not.

A very tender and safe cream for your very special baby. CHILD CARE NAPPY RASH CREAM is hygienically blended with special ingredients to prevent nappy rash and redness.

CHILD CARE BABY LOTION keeps your baby's tender skin soft & smooth. A gentle cosmetic cleaning lotion and make-up base for mothers. Keeps your skin young & glowing.

As tender and loving as the care you shower on your baby.  
Childcare Baby Cosmetics & Toiletries Division.

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KIRON/AB/78/

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A razor cuts the hair from above the skin surface, leaving behind an ugly razor stubble even nicks and cuts! What you need is gentle, feminine Anne French Hair Remover.

It works below the surface of the skin where no razor can reach. And it's so simple to use. Just apply the cream. Wait a while...and wipe it off along with the unwanted hair.

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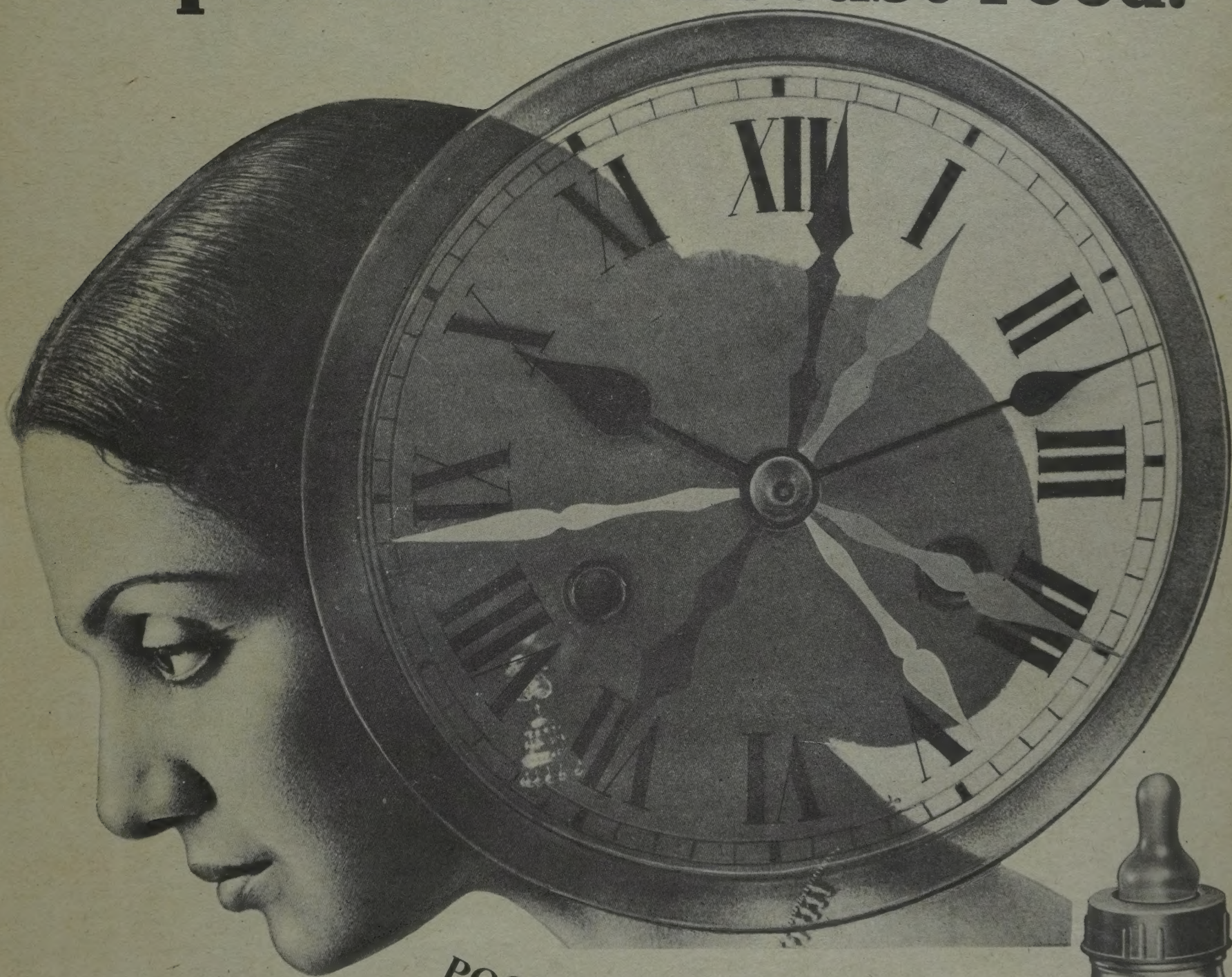


**Anne French**

HAIR REMOVER

Now in 2 fragrances

**Morning feed. Night feed.  
In-between feed.  
Not possible to breast-feed.**



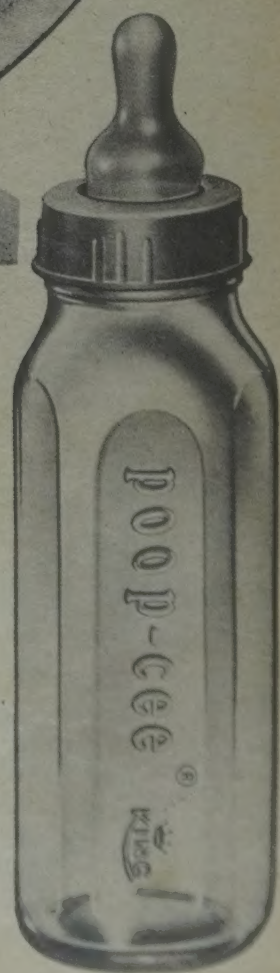
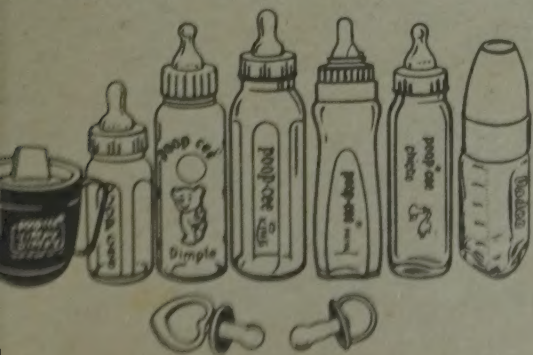
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care for baby with all the love that you do.  
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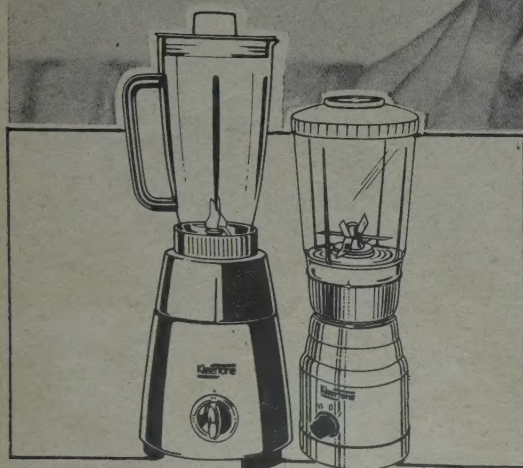
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India's largest selling  
baby feeders & nipples



As lasting as your love

# Kleertone



#### Kitchen-mate

Like an extra pair of hands, the Kleertone Mixer gets tiresome chores over in minutes. Both the 1 litre and  $\frac{3}{4}$  litre models conform to ISI specifications. The sturdy motor ensures a longer rating of 30 mins. and 10 mins. The mixing jar is perfectly aligned to prevent leakages and is available in san plastic. Aluminium and stainless steel jars also available as add-ons.



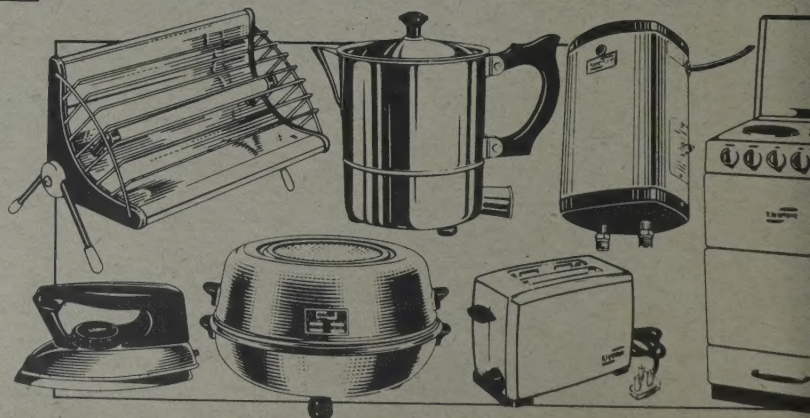
#### Magic meal maker

Kleertone Pressure Cookers cook tasty food in minutes. And cut your fuel bill too. The lid is reinforced with ribs for extra safety. The gasket is made of superior quality rubber to prevent perishing.

In homes across the country, the Kleertone name is a guarantee that never expires.

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#### KLEERTONE HOME APPLIANCE





## BELOVED BURDEN

A baby. Innocent, endearing, helpless. Tied to the mother by bonds which defy description, but which are eternally eulogised by writers and poets. It is the mother who loves, nurtures, guides and sacrifices. It is the mother who, like a gardener, plants the seeds of faith, truth and love that develop into the fairest flowers of character, virtue and happiness in the lives of her children. And so, when we speak of the child, can mother be far behind? She is quiet and self-effacing, caring not for her own health and comfort — but she is always there, always ready to carry her Beloved Burden.

Photo : Jagdish Agarwal

VOL. XXXIII NO. 51 BOMBAY

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PRINTER  
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PRINTED & PUBLISHED AT  
SANJ VARTAMAN PRESS  
BOMBAY SAMACHAR MARG, BOMBAY-400 023

PROPRIETORS  
EVE'S WEEKLY LTD., BOMBAY-400 023

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### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

India Rs. 65. Foreign Rs. 127 (Sea Mail)



# THE YEAR OF THE CHILD

WHAT do you do when you see a baby with a grotesque head, an emaciated body ravaged by malnutrition, its eyes popping out of the sockets? What do you do when you find a shockingly thin, scabies-covered arm reaching out to you begging for a coin or a loaf of bread? What do you do when you see twisted limbs, sightless eyes or hear a hacking, tuberculous cough, knowing that these "belong" to children? Do you turn your head away, in each of these situations; or do you look stonily ahead and mutter something about "the poor — this is their fate"?

Maybe you do feel pity — maybe you feel guilty and also helpless. But you have to realise the fact that these children have to be helped, that they are the wealth of our nation, our hope for the future.

This Special Issue, Dedicated To The Child, seeks to highlight Eve's Weekly's special concern for our children — indeed, for all children everywhere, be they urban or rural, black or white. We urge our readers, in this forthcoming International Year of the Child, to begin (if

they have never before done so) recognising the special needs of children. There must be awareness, to start with; an awareness of the gross neglect which insidiously ravages the child populations of many countries, including our own. Infant mortality, lack of nutrition, absence of safe drinking water, the woeful working of health services, the indifference to education and, very importantly, the deliberate neglect of little girls (as against boys) — all these have to be recognised in all their horrifying reality. We cannot afford to be smug; we cannot afford to sit back and smile at the children in Baby Shows and say "How cute!" There are millions of children crying out for a tenth of the same privileges, for a better life. Not only the Government and welfare organisations, but each individual must make an enormous effort to bring about this better life.

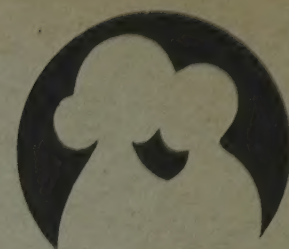
TO quote Gabriela Mistral, the famous poet who won the Nobel Prize: Many of the things we need can wait. The child cannot ... To him we cannot answer 'Tomorrow' — His name is 'Today'.

## A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The timing of your special issue on the child could hardly be more appropriate as we approach the threshold of the International Year of the Child. This is an occasion for countries and individuals to renew their commitment to the well-being of children, and to initiate long-term action to meet their needs. The IYC has already inspired great hopes that 1979 will represent a quantum leap in their shared determination to relieve the intolerable plight of more than 350 million children for whom every day is a crisis for survival.

As nurturers of the human race, women have a special responsibility for bringing about better conditions for the optimum development of the child and more effective guarantees of children's fundamental rights to adequate nutrition, health care, education and protection. Women have an important role in promoting higher priority for children through advocacy and action and in increasing national investment in children as part of development goals. Please accept on behalf of the IYC Secretariat our sincerest wishes that the readers of Eve's Weekly will actively support these objectives not only in 1979 but in the years beyond.

**Estefania Aldaba-Lim, Special Representative for the International Year of the Child.**



### SHANTI SADIQ ALI

President of the Citizens' Committee to celebrate the IYC in Maharashtra

It is well known that a majority of our children are brought up in poverty, are malnourished, underclothed and will not even complete Class IV, thus lapsing back into illiteracy. In its recent Sixth Plan document the Planning Commission has painted a gloomy picture. It states that:

"Attempts have been made to measure the extent of poverty in India, and depending on the terms used, 40-60 per cent of the population is below the minimum acceptable standards. According to a recent estimate,

### RENUKA DEVI BARKATAKI

Minister of State for Education and Social Welfare

Children in the age group 0-14 constitute about 42 per cent of the total population in India. We cannot remain insensitive to the well-being of this most populous group in the country.

Many of our children in the country are disadvantaged and deprived. The infant mortality rate in our country is as high as 122 per thousand live births. Such a high mortality rate results in wastage of human resources.

1979 is the International Year of the Child. The government of India has prepared a National Plan of Action for this year. The Plan envisages a number of programmes for children such as health care including immunisation, nutrition interventions, universalisation of primary education, etc. All these programmes require the cooperation and support of the voluntary bodies and the community at large. This cooperation and support are required to create an advocacy on behalf of children. Advocacy and action are the twin aims of the International Year of the Child. No programme for the children will be sustained unless there is a strong advocacy for the cause of the children.

The International Year of the Child is a year when we must arouse the conscience of everybody to the problems of children and to the steps that should be taken to meet these problems.

The rights of the children, as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, are also those that could be ensured only by the families or with their active assistance. It is here that every member of the community has a role to play to uphold and make real the rights of the child.

The first and the foremost role that everyone in the community could play is to be conscious about the rights of the child, about their problems, about their vulnerability and about the duties of adults to protect the children, to give the love



and affection that is due to them and to promote their well-being.

It is also important that members of the community and everyone of us realise that the children cannot speak for themselves and they cannot act for themselves. It is the duty and the responsibility of the elders and the community at large to ensure that the children do not suffer,

## "WHAT WE CAN

and that they get love and affection.

One of the objectives of the International Year of the Child is to reduce infant mortality by five per cent. This will require a significant step-up of the programme of immunisation.

Malnutrition has been recognised to be the most important single contributor to the high infant mortality and morbidity. Children, particularly those below the age of six, are the worst affected due to malnutrition. Mothers should start feeding their children with solid food from the fourth month onwards in adequate quantity. Locally available nutritious food should be given rather than expensive tinned food.

Investment in children is investment in human resources development. The fruits of this investment are available only after many years. Because of the delayed return on investment there is a perceptible reluctance to set apart resources for this sector. A better understanding of the importance of child development is necessary to create a climate in which the need for investment in this will be better understood and appreciated. Let us hope that we can achieve this in the International Year of the Child.

using norms of calorie consumption, the percentage of population below the poverty line in 1977-78 may be projected at 48 per cent in rural areas and 41 per cent in the urban areas. The total number of the poor, so defined, would be about 290 million. About 160 million of these fall below 75 per cent of the poverty line."

This is the environment then in which a majority of Indian children grow up. And these are the bare bleak facts which graphically underline the burden our government continues to bear despite the considerable expansion and extension of social welfare to assist children and young people in fulfilling their needs.

The magnitude of the problem also makes it abundantly clear that the government and voluntary sectors will need to cooperate more constructively to meet the needs of adequate growth of the child and not merely for survival into adulthood. To achieve this a radical reorientation is called for in our whole approach. This applies to both official and voluntary agencies.

A better physical environment, nutrition, health and immunisation, education, and socially enriching activities are some of the programmes which offer choices to the enlightened citizens, be they in the towns or the country-

side. But as we belong to a poor country, there is an urgent need to judiciously harness our resources, human and material, and utilise them carefully. This requires coordination and pooling of resources to minimise wasteful duplication,

ways bearing in mind what Khalil Gibran has said about the child:

"You can give them your love but not your thoughts

For they have their own thoughts

You can house their bodies but not their souls

involved with, both here as well as abroad. Her present major project is the 'Children's Complex' set up by her in a slum area in Bombay. Having been involved in child welfare for many years, she had mixed reactions to the forthcoming International Year of the Child.

"Declaring these years is meaningless, unless we achieve something substantial and there is a follow-up on the decisions taken. I was also connected with the IWY, but was disappointed with the results. I think the fault lies in our taking up too much, much more than we can cope with, instead of pinpointing our priorities and ensuring implementation", she says.

According to her, public awareness and cooperation is essential for the success of any project. The authorities should therefore encourage this involvement. The general feeling is that the government is there to tackle all problems. The most serious problem facing us is the massive increase of population. Approximately one million babies are born in India every four weeks. "How can the government, or any other social

lot. There are no authentic figures of the deaf children in our country, and they are the most uncared for of the handicapped because their disability is not visible. They form an enormous silent community.

"How can we expect anything from the children when many of them do not get even one proper meal a day? The Chinese have, to a great extent, solved the problem of malnutrition in children through a massive feeding programme. Poverty isn't a problem of our country alone, it's world wide, and children are its first target."

What can the woman of today do to help? "There is a great deal she can do. Let her begin at home." A civic-conscious and enlightened woman can have a great impact on her surroundings and be a source of strength and encouragement to her family, her neighbours and friends, and an asset to society.

On the topic of civic sense, Mrs. Jung elaborated, "At our 'Children's Complex' we have formulated an eight-point programme to arouse this feeling among our children and, through them, in their homes and families. We have also suggested the inclusion of civic awareness in school curriculum. I have requested Ali Sardar Jaffri to translate it into simple Hindustani and by setting it to music we will make it our daily prayer. Our endeavour is to reach every member of the family in the hutment colony where we are working, and plan programmes and projects for the young and old alike. It is amazing to find so much latent talent here, particularly in the children."

Mrs. Jung is working currently in the Kherwadi hutments. The initial projects were at Hanuman Teki and Daori Nagar. A gymnasium and a garden are being planned for the slums of Ghatkopar and Dharavi and an animal and bird library in Danda.

Her final message, "Every mother of today must make her own contribution to ensure a better world for our children."

#### Eight Points Towards Good Citizenship

1. Integrity
2. Consideration
3. Respect for and observance of rules and regulations
4. Courtesy
5. Respect of the property of others, particularly that which belongs to the country.
6. Cleanliness — both personal and of the environment
7. Respect for the religion, language and customs of others.
8. Dignity of labour and pride in one's work.

Amita Sarwal

Continued on page 46



# DO FOR OUR CHILDREN"

The role that youth can play in the development of services for the weaker sections of children has yet to be fully utilised. The N.S.S., the N.C.C., the Junior Red Cross, which are channelling the energies of the student community into nation-building activities, need to be emulated on a wider scale during the Year of the Child. These activities would in the process build up civic sense and leadership qualities among our youth. Similarly, educated women who are not employed outside their homes, could be called upon to contribute an hour or two in any of the above mentioned programmes without neglecting their own families. Committees could be set up in each ward or locality by leading welfare organisations to tap this vast unutilised talent.

A final warning, however, needs to be given. Let not the Year of the Child be a repetition of the Year of the Woman — "sound and fury signifying nothing". Let it instead be related to our immediate problems and shorn of the cliches and jargon borrowed from the West and alien to our national milieu. Above all, let it not be an annual ritual or a passport to go around the world in 365 days. Let it be a continuing programme to solve the multiple problems which are likely to be with us for quite some time but al-

**...eminent women,  
involved with the  
problems of children,  
give their views in  
this special feature**

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow

You can strive to be like them  
But seek not to make them like you

For life goes not backwards nor tarries with yesterday"

#### ZEHRA JUNG

Chairman of the State-level Committee for the establishment of Aurobindo Bal Kendras in Maharashtra

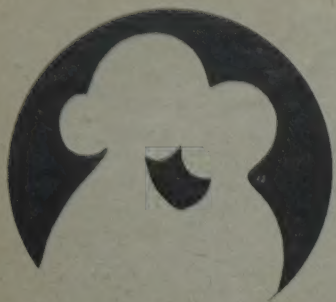
Begum Zehra Jung is the embodiment of elegance and graciousness. She was a deserving recipient of the Padma Bhushan for social welfare in 1977. There is an almost endless list of societies she is actively in-



organisation, carry out any plan successfully? The schemes go haywire because of the growing population. Family Planning has to be tackled individually and collectively. We have to wage a coordinated war against the surging population," she says.

"I was horrified to read a report of the ILO that 60 per cent of the world's 52 million working children (under the age of 15) are in India, and this number is dominated by girls," she said.

Discussing the second project that interests her — handicapped children, she says, "There are over 20 million handicapped persons in this country, and services are available for just about 7,000. The deaf are a much neglected



# THE LITTLE BEGGARS

Busybee

What they eat and how they survive, nobody knows...  
or cares — and people sitting in air-conditioned offices and  
donating large amounts to school funds  
help only those who do not really need the help

Nitin Jhaveri

All the beggar children in Bombay are my friends, friends whom I have been unable to help. So, occasionally, I give them a few paise and hope they would go and gamble the amount with other beggar children and make a fortune out of it.

Some of them I meet regularly and I know them and they know me. There was a little girl at one of the traffic lights near Bori Bunder, a large face with large round eyes and looking like a model for UNICEF or WHO posters on the hungry children on Asia. She never begged, she just came and stood at the taxi window and smiled as I passed the spot every morning. Red signal meant the taxi stopped and I gave her money, green signal meant the taxi passed through and I did not give her money. I never decided which I preferred, the red signal or the green signal.

I do not know where she is now, because one day she was not there and I have never seen her again. If she was not a beggar child, I would have thought she had gone to a boarding school or gone to England for studies. In all probability, she has gone to another traffic light where the profits are larger.

There was this boy, one leg missing from knee down, traveling at great speed on his single crutch. He used to hang around Churchgate, along with the flower-sellers, and nightly I would meet him and the flower-sellers as I came tottering out of the Ambassador Hotel bar, well after closing time. And then, one night, only the flower-sellers were there, the boy had disappeared.

I saw him almost a year later, looking taller, the crutch a little too short for him. He had been to a reformatory or a children's remand home or whatever it is called. They had taught him how to fix cane seats in chairs. And now he was back at Churchgate with no chairs to repair. And he was happy to be back, out in the open, free as a bird and all the rest.

For most of these children of the street are happy children. I have rarely felt sorry for them, except if a child is blind or crippled or visibly hungry. They live in railway stations, keep stray dogs as pets, share their food and their earnings with their companions, have no parents to make them go to school or be polite to strangers or have a bath.





Jhaveri

ols, which talk with great authority about organisations that hire these children and send them out begging every morning and collect them every night. And if there was some such organisation, I would be happy, because it would mean that at least there was somebody who was looking after these children. But I doubt the existence of such organisations.

And every year we organise children's days and children's weeks and get a VIP to inaugurate them and another VIP to pose for a photograph and we stick posters on the walls and banners across the roads and there is not one child who is even aware of what is being done in his name.

And, perhaps, it is best that these children are not aware of it because knowledge would only make them miserable.

It is much better to give them a little money to gamble with and pay generously for an occasional service of fetching a cab. And hope that the policemen, in their zeal, do not push them around too much, and watchmen do not drive them out of porticos on rainy nights.

And much better to take pleasure in their innocence and their freedom. For I cannot think of a free person in the whole city than an unwanted child, without any family supervision, jumping into a running train at Churchgate and riding off into the suburbs or wherever his fancy takes him. And I do not know of a more touching sight than an unwanted child feeding a piece of dry bread to a stray dog that he has adopted.

I have never felt sorry for these beggar children. The only thing that worries me is that little beggars grow up into big beggars and that is where all the misery starts.

R. J. Chinwalla

I see them all over, cocky little fellows with somebody's discarded plastic hat and somebody's discarded tee-shirt, smoking somebody's discarded cigarette butt, opening taxi doors, jumping into trains to reserve seats. They do all the fringe jobs, because nobody would give them a regular job. Except, perhaps, as a domestic servant, and these children have lived free too long to be domesticated.

The rains are their best and worst season. For their living quarters may be damp and often flooded, but there are always taxis to be chased and brought for passengers who do not want their terylene bush-shirts and saris to get wet.

How they eat and how they survive, nobody knows and no sociologist has made an effort to find out. It is one of the mysteries of the world, like how flowers bloom in the desert or little animals survive among all the wild beasts in the jungle. But they do. And it is other people's children, who drink only boiled water and eat only home-cooked food, who get jaundice and catch colds and fall sick.

What I find most strange about these children is that they live in an exclusive society of their own. They may accept a few paise or last night's stale

bread from an outsider, but nobody can enter their circle or become too familiar with them. And they are not dependent on anybody else.

I have often heard social workers talking about them. How they have started recreational classes for them in the evenings and how they collect them once a week and distribute milk and biscuits to them. As if the neglect of a lifetime can be made up by a cup of milk or a packet of biscuits which some biscuit company may supply in return for a little free publicity in the press. And I have heard social workers saying how grateful these children are and how all they are looking for is a little love and affection. And I have always wondered whether it is the children who need the love and affection of social workers or vice versa.

And I have heard other people. People who say that by giving a few paise to these children I am encouraging them to beg at an early age. As if the mere giving of money turns a person into a beggar. And I have heard people say that these children do not want to work. As if in a country where engineers and doctors are unemployed and farm labourers have no work for half the year, there

are jobs available for five and six-year-old children.

I have read articles in illustrated magazines, written by people who sit in air-conditioned cabins and pay Rs. 10,000 to school funds to get their own children admitted in good scho-





*With child labour rampant in the country,  
with sick and destitute children  
increasing in numbers every day, it is  
imperative we have strict legislation to  
safeguard their interests*

**Sujata Manohar**

"What has to be done has to be done now" says a brochure about Mobile Creches. In 1969 Meera Mahadevan reacted to the sight of children lying in the rubble and dust of construction sites in Delhi. In an impulsive gesture she set up the first creche on the work-site, and the mobile creche movement for migrant children began. It today covers per year about 4,000 children of construction workers in Bombay and Delhi. In numerical terms this ought to have an insignificant impact. But the movement has contributed a great idea.

There are migrant workers employed seasonally in a number of other industries apart from construction work. We do not have their exact numbers. Thus, for example, entire families migrate from their homes

to work in sugar factories during the crushing season. Their children are left in temporary huts near the sugar factories to fend for themselves while their parents work day and night. There are absolutely no amenities for these children. Older siblings look after the younger ones. Health workers from the comprehensive Rural Health Project in Jamshed (an area from where such workers migrate) have reported that malnutrition among these children is far greater than among the children who do not migrate. It is estimated that there are between 2,000 to 4,000 such children at each sugar factory. They have no protection of any sort and the factories are unwilling to shoulder any responsibility for them. These children of migrant workers form only a small part of the child popula-

tion that needs care and protection.

Far more serious is the problem of destitute children. This group consists of orphans, illegitimate children who are abandoned at birth by their mothers, and children who are abandoned by their parents out of economic necessity. The few children's homes that we have, try to cope with these destitute children. These homes are run either by the state or by private social welfare organisations. The extent of supervision over their working varies from state to state. These homes also shelter children who are victims of parental cruelty or neglect.

Lastly, there is a large group of children employed in organised and unorganised industries and agriculture. Unfortunately the data on child labour in India

Homi Khare



## DOES THE LAW

are limited. The last study on "Child Labour in India" was conducted by the Labour Bureau in 1954. For any later data the Census reports, the reports of the National Sample Survey and Agricultural Labour Enquiry Reports, etc., are the sources. According to the 1971 census there are about 230 million children in the age group 0-14. They constitute 42.02 per cent of the total population. The total number of child workers (under 15 years) is 10.74 million representing 4.7 per cent of the total child population and 5.9 per cent of the total labour force. The bulk of child labour is employed in agriculture (nearly 78.7 per cent of child labour). Among child labourers the highest participating group is the age group 10-14. In industries, child labour is employed in much greater numbers in the unorganised sector rather than in the organised sector. Thus children work in hotels, restaurants and canteens, wayside shops, as hawkers, newspaper sellers and coolies, helpers in service stations, repair shops, in the prawn industry, in domestic service or as shoeshine boys. They are often hired along with their parents in construction work. In the organised sector they work in tea and bidi making industries in

mica, shellac and glass industries, handloom weaving, leather tanning, carpet making, etc. The problems of children working in each of these industries may be different.

What sort of legal protection can be given to these children? Even if suitable legal protection is given, can it be actually provided? More important than legislation, we require a well-worked-out scheme for the enforcement of this legal protection, because children are not in a position to enforce their legal rights. These questions are going to crop up again and again during the next year. Unless we have adequate data about the problems of children, the answers that will be given to these questions may prove unsatisfactory or unworkable.

Let us consider first the problems of destitute children. A lot of spade work has already been done for the structuring of a legal framework for their protection. The foremost need of these children is for a home and a family. It is now well recognised that a child's need for love and affection — for a home as opposed to a residence — can be fully met only in a foster or adoptive home. An institution, however well-run it may be,



Unicef/T. S. Satyan

can never replace this vital need for a parent-child relationship. We must, therefore, have a law which enables couples to adopt a child.

Adoption is a very special legal relationship. After adoption an adoptive child legally becomes the child of its adoptive parents. The child acquires all the rights of a natural child in the adoptive family. Unfortunately, adoptions are legally permitted only among the Hindus. Even the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act is very restrictive, e.g., the right to take a child in adoption is restricted. Only a couple which does not have a son can adopt a boy and similarly only a couple which does not have a daughter can adopt a girl. One of the consequences of this rule is that a couple cannot adopt siblings who are brothers or sisters. There are also restrictions on persons who can give a child in adoption. Fortunately, it is possible to adopt a parentless child under the Act.

It is surprising that we express so much concern over the well-being of children taken in adoption by foreigners while we are totally insensitive to the grave abuse to which an adopt-

ed child in our own country may be subject. After all, the practice of using children as labourers and domestic servants is far more widespread here than abroad. It is therefore essential that our adoption laws should provide for adequate supervision over adopted children. A comprehensive adoption law is therefore vital. It would enable not only Hindus, but all other minority communities to take children in adoption. If Muslims have any religious objections to adoption, a separate charter in the Act can regulate adoption among Muslims in a manner consistent with their religious beliefs. But all other communities in the country badly need an adoption law in conformity with internationally accepted norms for the welfare of destitute children in the country. The need was felt as far back as 1955 when Mrs. Jayashree Raiji introduced in the Lok Sabha the first Adoption of Children Bill, 1955. It is a pity that nothing has been done in this area since then.

Apart from adoption, there are other ways of looking after destitute children or children coming from very poor families. Today, programmes for

sponsoring such children are run by voluntary agencies. These involve well-to-do couples giving financial and social support for the education of poor children. Then there are foster care programmes for children in need of temporary shelter. We have an excellent Guardians and Wards Act which is meant to cover temporary placements. In the light of these modern programmes for children, the Act can be reviewed and enlarged to cover such programmes also. There should also be a uniform law to provide for proper supervision over all institutions which give shelter to children. The various Children's Acts also require revision to ensure these objectives.

Legislation is also necessary to protect the children of migrant workers. Creches, medical-cum-nutritional programmes and education can be provided to these children by setting up temporary centres at work-sites. The Mobile Creche movement has given us a model which can be emulated elsewhere. The legal and financial burden for setting up such centres should be jointly on the employer and the government. If the employer is given ade-

quate tax relief in respect of the expenses incurred by him in running such a centre, he would not be found unwilling to co-operate in such a scheme.

The most difficult area of legislation concerns child labour. The needs of working children are clear. Their employment conditions need to be regulated in a manner which will protect them from abuse, exploitation and occupational hazards. Secondly, they need to be provided both time and facility for education and, thirdly, they require medical-cum-nutritional aid. Unfortunately, in view of our mass poverty, it would be futile to have any legislation banning child labour totally. But if employment of children is an unavoidable evil today, legislation can attempt to regulate the working conditions of children.

The main problems here are (1) lack of data and (2) the difficulty of implementing such a legislation. Most of the working children are employed in rural areas and in unorganised sectors. It, therefore, becomes extremely difficult to ensure that the legislative protection given to them is in fact provided to them. But that is no reason for denying them legal protection. Today there are numerous laws pertaining to individual industries which regulate the employment of children, e.g., the Factories Act, the Mines Act, the Plantation Labour Act and so on. Even the Employment of Children (Amendment) Bill of 1978 only seeks to prohibit employment of children below 15 in certain specified jobs.

Instead of these laws we can have a basic law which will regulate the age of employment for children and the amenities and the safeguards to be provided. Then under this Act separate rules can be framed for each industry which employs children. The Act should also provide for a machinery for its implementation. The responsibility for providing these amenities should not be entirely on the employer for a very simple reason. He will then be tempted to shirk it. If necessary, the government can also directly subsidise the scheme. Government assistance will also be required in getting trained personnel to man such schemes. And government and voluntary agencies can combine to ensure adequate supervision. We also have in the country a substantial reserve of educated non-working women. Some of them can be motivated to participate along with voluntary agencies in supervising such schemes.

Thus, with a little imagination, suitable legislation can be framed to safeguard the children of the nation. The task is a challenge to the conscience of the nation.

# PROTECT OUR CHILDREN?





# WANTED: SPECIAL CARE



Joseph St. A

*Children—both urban and rural — suffer from an appalling neglect which makes them vagrants, dropouts ... and worse. Deprived of family care, education and food and medicine, they often grow up with a grudge against society*

## URBAN CHILDREN

Sixteen-year-old Ram Prasad grew up doing nothing, under the lengthening shadows of several multi-storeyed buildings which have grown to be a feature of New Delhi. His parents were construction labourers, working long hours to feed the family, which meant the children were neglected. Today Ram Prasad is a petty criminal.

On the other hand, Buddhi Lal of the same community dropped out of school and went to work in the nearby tea shop at the age of eight. Now he is a young man — uneducated, poorly paid, but making an honest living.

Children below 16 years of age account for about half of India's urban population. Lakhs of them live in mud, tin, gunny-bag or thatch shacks in unplanned shantytowns, along with their desperately poor parents. For the city, these communities officially do not exist.

Alcoholism, prostitution, gamb-



ling, smuggling, bootlegging, hoodliganism, are rife. This kind of situation makes for an unstable family relationship, which normally has the most devastating impact on children.

Some children join the fight for survival at an early age and do all kinds of things to supplement their parents' incomes. They might be shoeshine boys, street vendors, self-styled car attendants, tea shop waiters, dishwashers and scavengers, working long hours for a pittance. Nevertheless along with the few still continuing school, these are the fortunate ones.

In the absence of organised recreational facilities, it is the children with nothing to do that pose the biggest problem. They become vagrants and acquire a taste for gambling and the movies, all of which require money. Soon they drift into petty crime — minor theft, picking pockets, and smuggling liquor and drugs. They might even become professional agitators whenever the occasion

arises — hired for political processions.

Says Sindhu Phadke of UNICEF, who has done a lot of work on the urban child, "Children who have once experienced the power which money brings find it extremely difficult to return to any rehabilitation programme demanding any sense of discipline and responsibility. The already weak ties with their families become even more tenuous, and the possibility of their social and emotional rehabilitation recedes further."

in other cities live on the streets, in corridors and cattle-sheds. Three-fourths of these living in metropolitan areas have no private latrines, bathrooms, water taps or sewerage facilities. Less than half of India's urban population has access to protected water supply.

Since these slum colonies are often illegal, the municipality sometimes refuses to provide them basic civic services and other facilities like schools, nurseries, creches and dispensaries, says Dr. Subhash Chandra of the National Institute of Public Co-



Joseph St. Anne

all, and half of these got less than five litres per month. And 41 per cent got neither meat nor fish; those who did, only in very nominal quantities; 30 per cent got eggs, but nine out of ten of these fewer than five a month.

Some children complained that so little food was cooked in their homes that they quarrelled among themselves to get an adequate share. Others said they never got special food — even during festivals. Worse still, slum children commonly ate stale food, which vendors sold at a discount, causing serious health problems.

The upshot of this was that 75 per cent of the children had tooth disease, 50 per cent eye trouble, 25 per cent ear trouble and a

very large number stomach and skin ailments. Most slum children had vitamin B deficiency. And ten per cent had one physical ailment or the other at the time of the study.

About 40 per cent of the children did not attend school. Those that were on school rolls reported poor performance. The dropout rate was high.

Then, parents often moved from slum to slum, to be closer to their place of work. This seriously dislocated the social and educational life of the children. In some areas there were no separate girls' schools. And parents were

Nitin Jhaveri



The seriousness of the problem cannot be underestimated. Sixty-five per cent of households in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Delhi live in one-room tenements. One third of Calcutta lives in hustees or on the pavement amid squalor and disease. Bangalore is known as a garden city yet over 100,000 of its people live in slums. The 1961 census reported that one out of every 65 Bombay citizens was homeless. The situation today is hardly to be much worse. Many

operation and Child Development (NIPCCD), New Delhi. "Voluntary organisations also shy away because they feel that if there is mass demolition of these colonies, their efforts might go waste."

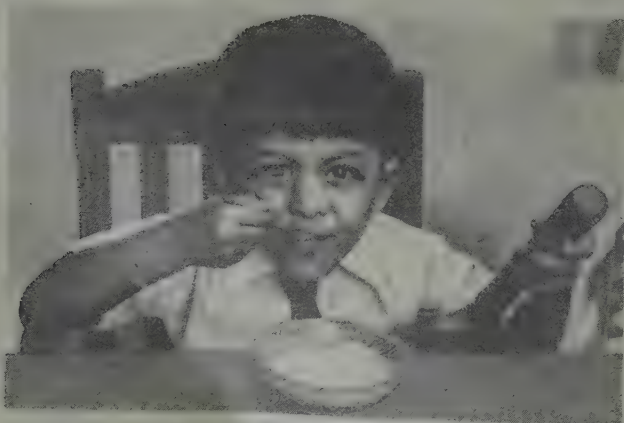
The fact that both parents work, and often the children, does not mean the families live in anything but acute poverty. A study conducted in some Delhi slums by Mr. Musafir Singh and Mr. Nagendra Nath of the NIPCCD showed that only 20 per cent of the children were getting any milk at

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unwilling to allow their daughters to study in co-educational schools beyond a certain age. Hence more girls dropped out, even though their pass percentage was higher.

There is little doubt that the lot of India's urban children is appalling. It will be a long time before they are provided the most elementary amenities and basic social services. There is a resources problem. But there is also the problem that the given resources are not used effectively. There is considerable overlapping of services provided by various agencies in certain areas, while other areas are completely ignored. Sometimes two government agencies, or two private ones, duplicate work.

The effort could be better co-ordinated so that governmental and voluntary agencies may continue to specialise in providing specific services, but join hands in the overall service of children. For instance, a voluntary agency serving vagrant and socially mal-adjusted children has used a municipal school in the evening for a recreation centre for non-schoolgoing children. It also trained them there in handicrafts and other work, to help them supplement their family income.

(UNICEF Feature Service)

Arun M. Chacko

## RURAL CHILDREN

The rural child, like any urban child, needs love and food and is fond of toys and games. The rural child also likes fun and frolic, but unlike children elsewhere he is not very resourceful in inventing ways of entertaining himself as also in solving his problems. A survey of children's needs in the Kheda district of Gujarat during SITE revealed the appalling fact that the village child is far from being innovative. He can think of only routine solutions to problems. Similarly, an FTII survey of children's needs in some villages in Maharashtra showed that the children

there spend most of their free time in aimless playing and gossiping. All this, according to developmental psychologists, can be traced to the fact that the village child in India is deprived of intellectual stimulation, guidance and leadership. Thus there is dire need to accelerate the intellectual development of rural children. In the absence of this, the potential cannot be developed. Of course, no one says that the rural child is in any way inferior to the urban child. It is only a question of helping him to realise his potential.

The high rate of school drop-outs is a major problem in rural India. First of all, not all rural children get enrolled in schools, and most of those who do drop out very early in their school life. Pre-school children constitute about 20 per cent of the total population; of these 37 per cent drop out in the first grade itself.

According to the NCERT, most of these children belong to the rural-urban poor classes. Several surveys conducted by the FTII in Maharashtra villages have revealed that though the school dropout rate is very high for all rural children it is especially noticeable among girls, particularly after grade five. This is related to many complex issues such as (1) non-availability of separate schools for girls, (2) need to take care of younger siblings, and (3) girls are confined to homes after a certain age. Therefore, though the "uninteresting school set-up" is a major factor for the school dropout rate, it is not the full story. There are many social and economic reasons for this, such as poor health and the fact that the

children have to work along with their parents.

Among rural children, the problems of ill health are mostly due to general poverty and ignorance. According to the 1971 census, 80 per cent of the population lives in rural areas. Children up to the age of 14 constitute 41 per cent of the total population, and 71.02 per cent are illiterate. Nearly 40 per cent of the rural population lives below the poverty level. Many children in villages suffer from bronchitis, diarrhoea, malaria and typhoid. Skin diseases are common in villages which lack clean drinking water, as in Maharashtra. The FTII survey revealed that scabies was common among the children in their survey villages. Also, be-



Photographs: Homi Kharas

cause of ignorance and poverty often villagers do not seek proper medical aid.

Nutrition is poor in most of the villages in India. While pre-testing TV programme scripts and story boards for SITE programmes, it was learnt that the children in Rajasthan villages had no knowledge about common vegetables. The only vegetables that most of them were familiar with was potatoes. Their common meal is a big chappati and some "chha-chh" prepared from curds collected over days. Similarly, the children in the villages of Maharashtra have just a 'bhakar' and chutney.

The only redeeming feature seems to be that the rural child has no deprivation as far as love is concerned. He receives a lot of love from his parents, the extended family, from relatives and family friends. Therefore, his need for love warmth and security are satisfied right from birth.

Mira B. Agbi



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Babies are found on garbage heaps, mauled by vicious dogs, or fished out of sewers. Yet, we who crusade against cow slaughter and meat-eating turn a blind eye to the plight of these children

Arun Gandhi

The family of a construction magnate of Bombay whose assets are computed in crores of rupees abandoned a six-month-old baby boy, purportedly because the boy's parents died young and there was no one to look after him. This they have stated in an affidavit.

The truth, I am told, is quite different. Those who know the family claim the trouble started when the child's mother entered the family with insufficient

dowry. Then within a few years the girl was stricken with cancer and the in-laws decided there was no use wasting money on her treatment. She died soon after delivering the baby and was followed by her grief-stricken husband. The newborn baby boy was left to face the wrath of a hostile family.

In the palatial home of this millionaire family there was no love or understanding for the baby. He virtually survived on the mercy of the servants who occasionally fed and cleaned him. When he became an embarrassment for the family they decided to discard him at an orphanage. Like the children of the poor, this boy, too, suffered from malnutrition bordering on rickets.

At about the same time, in a leading public hospital in Bombay a poor woman who earned her living by selling her body delivered a baby girl she did not want. The conception was treated as an occupational hazard. She didn't care whether the baby lived or died as long as she was rid of it.

These two cases represent the wide variety of reasons why people abandon children, swelling their number to well over two million. Only about 100,000 of them find places in institutions. The rest grow up in the streets and gutters to become vagrants, and threaten the society which has shown them no mercy.

In spite of our professed religiosity, our immense fountain of love and compassion which impell us to crusade for a ban on cow slaughter and meat-eating we are, undoubtedly, the worst hypocrites and child abusers in the world.

In Bombay city alone 1,300 babies are discarded every year. They are found on garbage heaps, mauled by hungry pariah dogs or fished out of toilets and the city's vast underground network of sewers. Those who survive are institutionalised where life is no pleasanter than the circumstances of their birth.

Our politicians and social reformers vociferously campaign against the distribution of eggs

to municipal school children because it militates against the Hindu philosophy of vegetarianism. Noblemen like Acharya Vinoba Bhave stake their very lives to save the holy cow, but no one ever bats an eyelid at the sight of a hungry, dying child. The common man merely shrugs his shoulders and goes about his daily routine.

This insensitivity is reflected in our M.P.s who discarded early this year the Indian Adoptions Bill of 1972 with much less concern than mothers have shown when abandoning their babies. It had been in the making for well over two decades and when it eventually came up in the Rajya Sabha no one thought that this innocuous Bill would be scuttled on communal grounds. But it was.

Adoptions may not be the only answer to the problems of destitute children, but neither is the creation of more orphanages a desirable solution. Institutions are, by and large, badly managed. Besides, they generally tend to help only two sets of people — the ambitious society ladies who vie with each other to get on to the managing committees so that they can boast of their achievements, and the ill-paid staff who find yet another convenient avenue to syphon off funds to maintain their own families. The orphans are left to their own miseries. No wonder the mortality rate in most orphanages is as high as 60 per cent.

## THE URGENT NEED FOR ADOPTION



With a more liberal adoption law, two million orphans can easily find love and a home.

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## THE URGENT NEED FOR ADOPTION

Ideally, what we need is not just a more comprehensive law which will enable others, apart from Hindus, to adopt children, but a more intensive introspection to find out what we can do to help supplement the government's efforts.

We could also do with more humane and sensitive judges who would sometimes deign to look up from their law books and be moved by realities that surround them. Judges are known to have shown compassion in commuting death sentences of murderers because they haven't been conclusively satisfied with the evidence led. Why then do they display such hard-headedness when it comes to dealing with children whose young lives are in a mess for no fault of theirs?

A girl was abandoned by her poverty stricken mother who lived on the pavements of Bangalore. The mother said she had to leave the child because she wanted to marry again. For several years the baby grew up in a Bombay orphanage and was recently chosen by a Canadian couple for adoption. She is now just about eleven. However, the law requires that a thorough search must first be made to find the biological parent before a baby can be sent out of the country. Unfortunately for this girl her mother was traced. She still lives in poverty in a slum in Bangalore, but they now see lucrative possibilities in a grown-up girl. In spite of the girl's objections, a Bombay Judge ruled that a child is the property of her mother. Poverty, prostitution and the pavement is all that this young girl can now look forward to.

In Simla, a baby boy had been abandoned in a hospital ten months ago. Though seven couples have since come forth to adopt the child a Simla magistrate has found some lacuna in the law to obstruct his adoption. He insists the child be given to an institution although no orphanage there has the facility to look after such a young baby.

According to the only law that permits adoptions in India today — The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Law of 1956 — adoptive parents have to satisfy several requirements which many feel are rather unjust. First, adoptive parents are subjected to a searching character study, including interviews of neighbours, to find out what the couple's moral standing is. This is followed by a study of their temperament and disposition. Income and character certificates have to be produced and the adoptive parents must be at

least 21 years older than the child they wish to take. In addition they must not have a child of the same sex as the one they wish to adopt. Not even a living grandson, grand-daughter or a great grandson.

What rankles most adoptive parents is that no such enquiry is made when two people decide to have their own children. There is no restriction on the number of children they can have, nor is there a study to determine whether they can afford to have any at all. Why then should the bonafides of adoptive parents be suspected when they come forth to

ed continue to subscribe to unfounded and baseless prejudices. It has been medically proved that except for features and colour a child inherits nothing else from parents. It is therefore not true that a prostitute's daughter will be a prostitute or a saint's son a saint. A child is a product of its environment.

Given the freedom to adopt, and the inclination among us to do so, two million orphans can easily find love, understanding and a home in India. Besides, those who cannot adopt should be able to sponsor a child by paying Rs. 80 a month for his or

## MUSIC FOR IYC...

Britain's famous pop group, the Bee Gees, have announced plans to launch **Music for UNICEF**, a unique way of raising money by donating musical compositions to UNICEF.

The project will be officially inaugurated with a gala concert in January.

At a joint news conference with David Frost and Robert Stigwood last May, the Bee Gees said they would donate one of their latest compositions for the benefit of UNICEF and hoped that other composers would do the same.

"We just want to be one... or three of many," said Maurice Gibb.

A souvenir record of the inaugural concert is also being planned and all media profits will be for the benefit of UNICEF.

## CHILDREN-As seen from outer space

A being in outer space may some day get his first impression of children on the planet Earth from a photograph if he, she or it has the scientific ability to decode it!!

One hundred and sixteen drawings and pictures have been encoded in digital form on a metal phonograph record, in one of Man's first attempts to depict the cultural and scientific life of his planet to creatures in outer space.

The record, which also contains greetings in 60 languages including messages from United Nations Secretary, General Kurt Waldheim, and President Carter, music and other Earth sounds, is now hurtling through outer space aboard two NASA spacecrafts on an extraordinary journey which will last one hundred million years!

The spacecrafts, Voyager I and Voyager II, launched last summer, will investigate the planets Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and their moons before being ejected from the solar system as the third and fourth interstellar spacecrafts ever launched from Earth.

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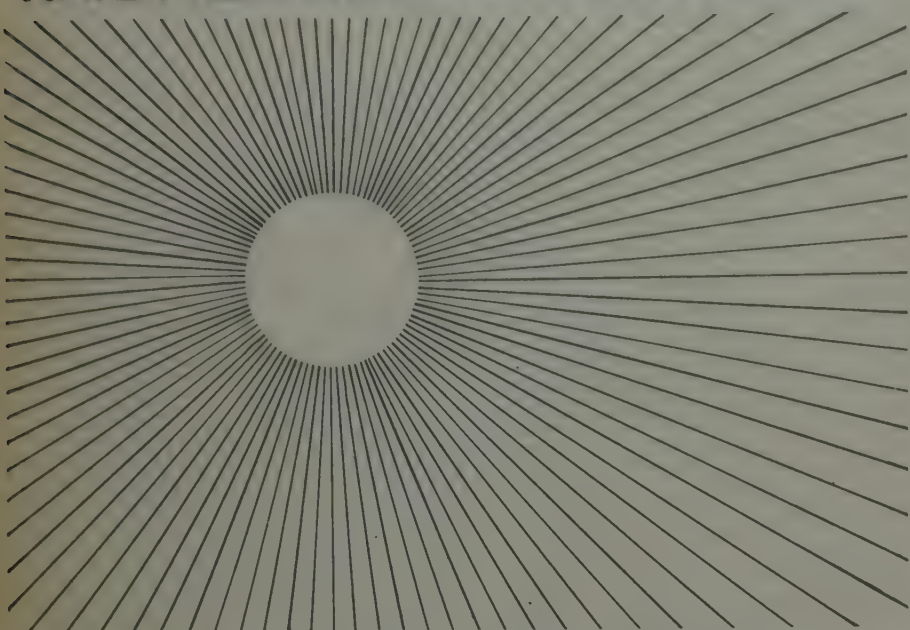
Clearly our laws are inadequate and out-dated and we, as a nation, are complacent and uncaring. We tend to forget that with a little effort on the part of each individual we can alleviate substantially the miseries of those who have nothing and nobody. In the West a growing number of young couples alive to the realities of today, have decided not to have children of their own but to adopt orphans and the neglected. In India, even the educated and enlighten-

her education, nourishment and treatment. This is a well-organised scheme with social workers checking the progress of the child and keeping the donor informed.

The problem of the poor and destitute is enormous but by no means insurmountable. There are ten million people in India who can afford to pay Rs. 80 a month without feeling the pinch. All it needs is some understanding, compassion, dedication and perseverance — traits which have their roots in our tradition. Are they now so dead that we cannot even revive them?

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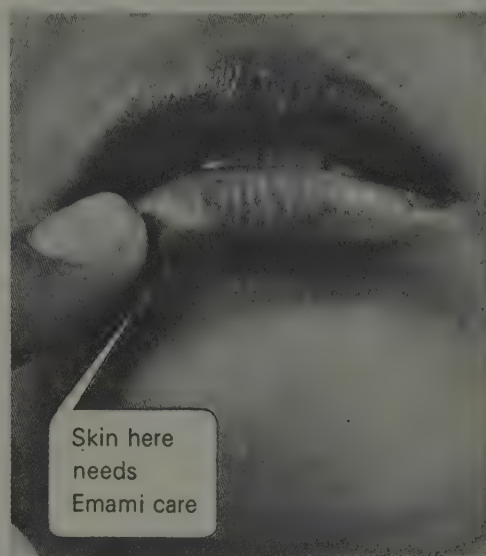
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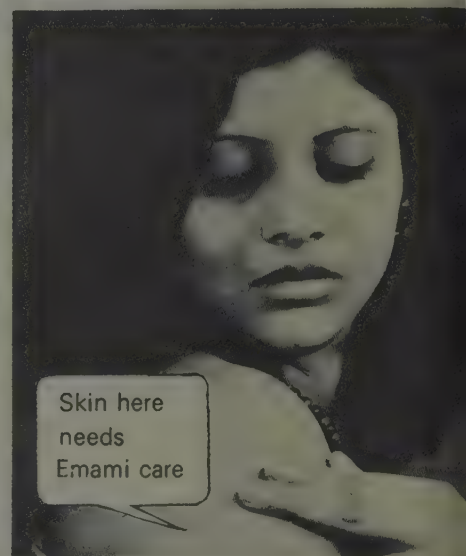
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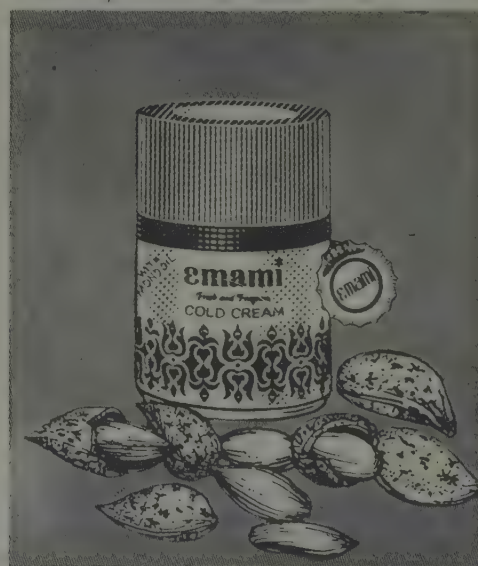
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Interview with **Dr. Datta N. Pai**,  
Director, Family Planning and  
Maternal and Child Health  
Services, Municipal Corporation of  
Greater Bombay.

"In the final analysis, tomorrow is decided by today's plans for our children. The growth and development of a child depends upon its growth and development **before** birth itself. And it is here that — I would like to pose two vital questions — are we fit to be parents? And in what way are we going to help the child after it is born?

"I think our children are the most uncared-for wretches in the world. There's nothing like responsible parenthood, for one — what kind of education do our urban and rural people receive anyway, before they become parents? Every year 2.5 million couples move out of the reproductive age-group and 5.1 million step in. Marriage is universal and children are God's gifts, no matter if you can't feed or clothe or house them. I am questioning the very right of these irresponsible people to be parents. Are they physically, mentally and socially fit to be parents?

"Parents must be made to understand their responsibilities before they are allowed to have children. The U.K. and the U.S.A. have laws for the prevention of cruelty to children. There are laws which prevent children from being deprived of their nutritional and emotional needs. Who has punished a father here for depriving his child? I firmly believe that nobody has a right to deprive a child — and our children are the most deprived ones on earth. Definite legislation which squarely attempts to bring responsibility to parents before they beget children is therefore essential and, in fact, the only solution. If we really care for a child and its future, we have got to inculcate in parents this sense of responsibility.

"Out of every 1,000 children born in India every year, as many as 100 are fated to die. It is a matter of shame that one out of every ten children born will not even live long enough to celebrate its first birthday. This also is taken for granted in our country. Why do our children die so early in life? Because their intra-uterine development is poor. The child is deprived even before it is born — depri-



UNICEF / T. S. Satvan

vation begins in the womb itself — and after birth, it gets deprived again... and dies. These deprived children only get born to die. Yet no one seems to have given them a thought...

"The problem requires a three-pronged attack; one, ensuring that parents understand their responsibility before conceiving children; two, safeguarding the intra-uterine growth and development, and, three, safeguarding extra-uterine growth and development.

"Now, for the second and third objectives what you need is an efficient Maternal and Child Health (MCH) care infrastructure — and we have nothing of the sort. Take toddlers, for instance — the age group 0 to 5 years — who constitute about 15 per cent of our child population today. This is the period of greatest growth and development. Every factor that the child is subjected to, during this crucial period, is going to leave an indelible stamp on him. The child is, as it were, in a melting pot and every little thing that you do — or do not do — to him is going to leave a mark. I hear a lot of people moaning nowadays about the increasing number of children becoming criminals. Why not? I'm not surprised. We've neglected them during their most vulnerable phase. Food, toys, love, these are a child's birthright. And our children are deprived of everything, except perhaps love. Sometimes I look at our filthy, disease-ridden children living in the most horrifying of environments — and wonder how they manage to survive at all. They seem to exist solely on their mothers' love.

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Shivanand Karkal

Continued on page 55



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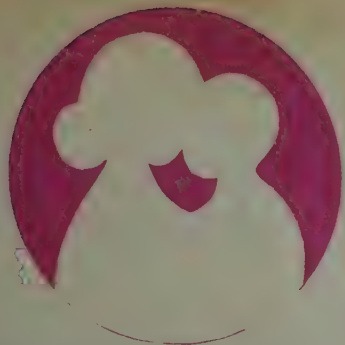
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## THE WORKING CHILD



cational opportunities, lessens their chances for vocational training, stunts their physical growth, and—to top it all—it forces children into unskilled jobs with no hope of moving into a higher grade. This condemns them to low wages forever.

It is tragic that because children are the most vulnerable group in any society and hence in need of the greatest social care, they are also the most exploited in most unequal societies, like India. Employers take advantage of the children's need for money and put them to work in the most unhealthy of conditions, and only in the unorganised sector where labour laws are

rarely implemented. Children who are a mere seven years old often have to work seven to eight hours for 50 paise! Some employers and labour inspectors employ children out of "sympathy" for their need.

The irony of the situation is aptly expressed in the following blunt statement:

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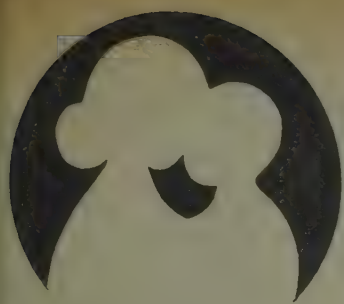
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# CHILDREN OF SORROW

Despair.

The word sums up the life of children kept in institutions. Abandoned by their parents, neglected by their warders, forgotten by India whose legacy, along with other children, they are, the bleakness of their future is equalled only by the sadness of their past. The blame, if any individuals can be blamed at all, is not on the keepers of the institutions alone. The more human among them share the despair of the children and the more articulate among them express their frustration at being helpless to change a system that makes these children lonely aliens in the community.

The system. Again and again it is reviled by administrators anguished at the suffering of children torn from their brothers and sisters and squeezed into uniform, dehumanised categories. The system: pervasive, final, implacable. Administrators speak sullenly of it as though it were malignantly human, though actually there is no single system. But the different systems in different states are all united in their singular inability to give a child security, affection and education.

For instance, when five children five to sixteen years old were destituted in Delhi when their mother died in childbirth and their father became insane, the basic flaw in the system manifested itself in the lack of an identifying agency to pinpoint destitute children. Finally some persons brought the children into contact with the relevant agencies which performed according to the appropriate rules and placed the children in a remand home at the precise moment when they were most desperately in need of the strength and comfort remand homes are not famous for providing. After several months the Child Welfare Board decided on their case, and sent the five children to five different homes. The children, clinging to each other as their only source of strength, were separated, probably not to see each other for many years.

In the home itself each child has Rs. 75 spent on him by the government. This sum has to provide for food, clothing, books and schooling, whose quality and quantity can be deduced from the money invested. The education itself is often imparted within the artificial environment of the children's homes. The homes are run by personnel who Dr. S.K. Mukherji of the United Nations in a very thorough study

of homes in Bombay and Delhi found to be usually frustrated, demoralised, badly paid, poorly trained, ill educated and given to indiscriminate beating of the children, though this is clearly against the rules. Not surprisingly, the majority of the children never even finish high school. They are supposed to be provided with vocational training in

***Orphaned, destitute children are the weakest of the weak sections of society. Abandoned and neglected, these children, if not salvaged, face a bleak future***

Anurag Mathur

such fields as gardening and cooking for boys, and knitting and sewing for girls.

The question then arises whether the child has been imparted sufficient skills to enable him to make his way in a harshly competitive world. This question becomes crucial because at the age of eighteen, as decreed by the system, the child becomes an adult and has to leave even the somewhat dubious protection of the home. Heartbreaking instances are recounted when the police has had to be called to forcibly eject an eighteen-year-old into a world he knew he was unable to face.

Often opportunities open if a child is adopted. There is some adoption work being done by groups like the Indian Council of Child Welfare which reports that the demand for babies far exceeds the supply. The demand is from India as well as from America and Europe, particular-

ly Scandinavia, though the governments concerned are markedly less enthusiastic than the prospective parents. The demand in India is chiefly for boys who are quickly adopted by couples kept on a long waiting list. Baby girls evoke considerably less interest in India, and then too only "if they are fair skinned and beautiful," says Mrs. Baccha of the Council.

Since the demand exceeds the supply, a blackmarket has grown that is run by women masquerading as social workers who take babies from orphanages and sell them at premium rates, usually to foreigners.

Many more babies could be legally given for adoption into a more comfortable life were it not, says Mrs. Baccha, for the refusal of many government homes to part with babies, even for highly recommended parents and even when the children in the home suffer from malnutrition and other problems related to inadequate finances. This reluctance is said to be due to the fear that grant money to the home may be revoked and jobs lost if there are not enough children in the home.

There are, however, a few rays of hope. For instance, work being done by the SOS Children's Villages of India has proved to be successful. SOS has resurrected in a modified form the ancient 'gurukul' system where the children live as one family under a father figure. Brothers and sisters are kept united and live in a cottage with a house mother. They get the attention and affection all children crave and the result is demonstrated in their academic success.

This method is more expensive than the other system, but its cost is offset by the contributions the children make to society as skilled adults as against the products of other homes who are sometimes driven into crime or destitution. They become parasites on society.

It is still not too late to restructure the system and adopt a more human approach to these children whom Mr. J. N. Kaul, the Director of SOS, calls "the weakest of the weak sections of society". They are obviously as talented as anybody else. Despite the bleakness of their lives it has been found that only a few of them become juvenile delinquents, though the prospects of large numbers of them living as unemployed and verging adults is far from reassuring.

"Children themselves are clean and sweet," says Mr. Kaul, "it is adults who pervert them. An unguided child is a tool in the hands of criminals." Still, unlike other countries where destitute children are sometimes a very real criminal force, "our children" notes Mr. Kaul, "are all gentle." So far.





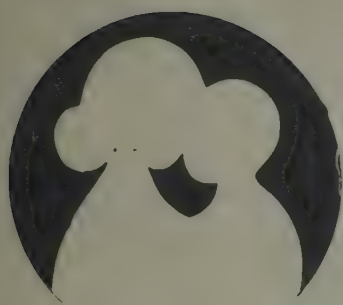
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"New bangles, Kusum?"

Kusum nodded, purposefully setting her long earrings dancing. "Do you like them?"

"They're all right."

They're beautiful. I wish I had a pair like that. I hate my plastic ones. No tinkle, the design and colour all washed out. They're ugly.

"I got them in the Navaratri fair. My dada bought them for me. These earrings too."

Not fair! Why don't I have someone like Kusum's dada? For

a moment, the woman came into her mind. . . that woman with the smiling face, soft lap, gentle voice and affectionate eyes. Then she let her go. What was the use? At such times, even this friend failed her and became what she was. . . not real.

"Are you going to the fair?"

"Don't know." She tried to be casual. As if it was nothing to her. As if she didn't care. And then, cunningly, brought out the important question. "How much did they cost?"

"Don't know. Dada paid for them. Four rupees, I think."

Bravely she recovered herself. Her face wore a curiously adult look as she said, "Quite cheap."

And Ai will say if I ask her. . . do you think money grows on trees?

But she could not help herself. "Ai," she asked as soon as she reached home, "can you give me four rupees?"

Ai's eyes, always so large in her thin, small face, became even larger. "Four rupees? What for? Have you gone crazy? Another book, I suppose. God, your schooling is killing me. And your Baba scolds me as if I. . ."

"No, Ai, not for a book."

"What for then?"

"Just like that."

"Just like that? You think money grows on trees?"

"I want to go to the Navaratri fair," she suddenly blurted out. "I want to buy a pair of bangles. Like Kusum's. So pretty, Ai. Red and shiny. And. . ."

"My God! Bangles! And look at your clothes."

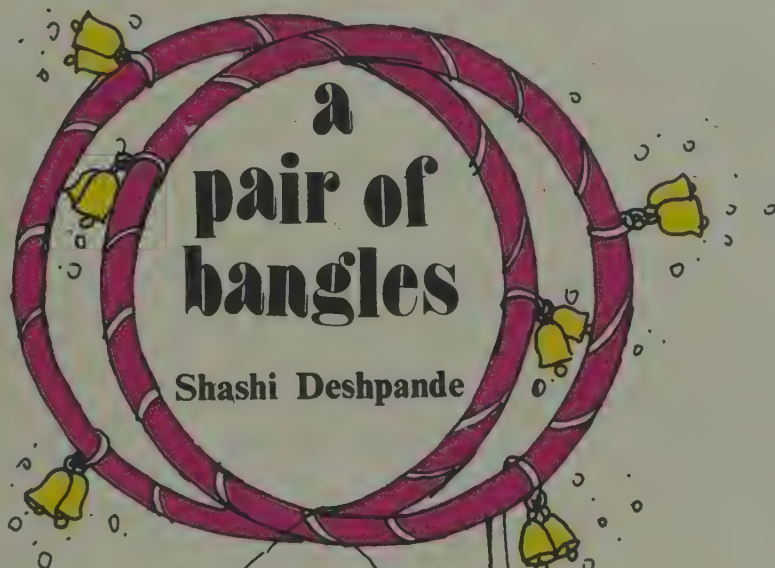
She had only one set of school clothes. She washed it every evening after coming home from school. But somehow the oil

## A SPECIAL STORY, WRITTEN FOR THIS ISSUE

A pair of bangles. Red, with gold flecks on them. And four pairs of little bells on each, giving out an enchanting tinkle. It was Kusum sitting next to her in class who came to school wearing them. And sat with both her hands on the desk, desperately showing off, while pretending to be casual.

Proud peacock, she thought. I'll pretend I haven't noticed them.

But how could she when they glittered and sparkled at her so? Almost as if they were winking at her.



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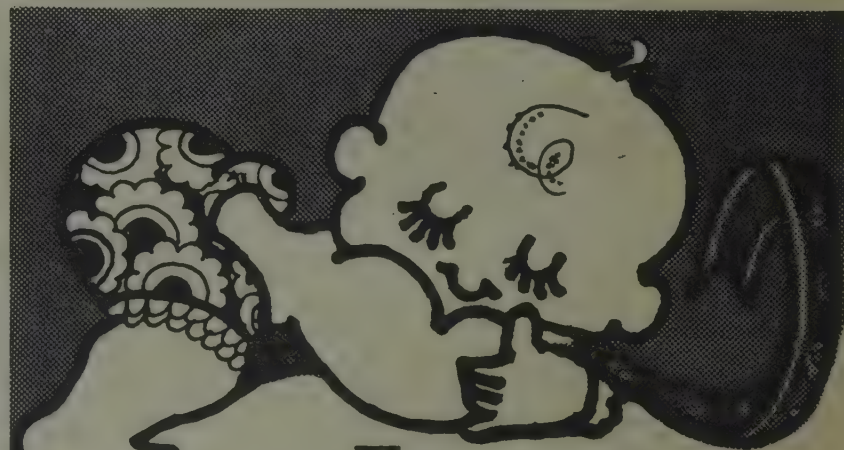
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## A PAIR OF BANGLES

marks of her pigtailed on the back of her white blouse refused to go. And the hooks of her skirt kept bursting open, leaving a gaping hole in her side. And the blouse, too short now, kept coming out of the skirt all the time. The other day Gupte bai had said, "Look at the way you dress! Aren't you ashamed to come to school like this? Can't you be clean and tidy at least? And to add to that, your homework is never done. Why?"

Why? She had thought of a hundred possible excuses and rejected all of them. The truth she had not even considered. How could she reveal that?

Shaila. . . Premi is hungry. Get her a bun from the bakery.

Shaila. . . Sunita has finished. Go and wash her.

No, better to say nothing. Better to stand silent, not a word, even if that enrages Gupte bai all the more.

"Can I have a new skirt and blouse, Ai?" she had asked that evening.

"You think money grows on trees?"

And now. . . "You need another set of school clothes. And I must have a new stove. This one drinks up kerosene like a demon. And Krishna needs a bottle of tonic. . ."

"Only this once, Ai. I won't ask for anything else. Promise."

"Don't be silly! I thought you were more responsible. And you the eldest! A big girl like you, should have more sense. Come on now, mix the dough for me. Your Baba will be home soon and God help us if his food isn't ready. You start. I'll put Krishna to sleep and come." Ai had already lost interest. She was absorbed in Krishna.

"Aren't you happy, Shaila, a baby brother after three sisters?" they had asked her. At first a brother was to her no different from Premi, Sunita and Sonu. But she soon found out the difference. The fuss made over him. And Ai never being well, more work was pushed on to her. Looking after Premi, Sunita, Sonu, getting things from the shop, bringing in water, grinding the masala, cleaning pots and pans and dirty clothes. . . Yet there was nothing she hated so much as mixing the dough. Nowadays the dough seemed an enemy to her, huge and strong and something she could never defeat. Her small fingers ached with the effort of bringing it all together; and when she had done the dough, the big fat lump looked as if it was grinning at her, wicked, malicious, triumphant.

Today it was at its worst, clinging to her fingers, her palms in a frightening, sticky tenacity

as if it would never let her go. The sobs rose in her, choking her. Tears came down, slowly at first, gathering into one large quivery drop on the end of her nose. She squinted through it, forgetting her grief for a moment, fascinated by the colours that danced and shimmered through her lashes. It was like seeing the bangles again. And then the tears came faster.

vessels that seemed too heavy for the skinny arms, touched him. "Nonsense," he said. "She's not troublesome. What is it?"

"She wants to go to the Navaratri fair. And spend four rupees on a pair of bangles."

"Is that all? Let her have it then." He got up.

"And where's the money to come from?"

She turned. . . eyes swollen, a bruise on the forehead.

"What is it, Ai?"

"My misfortune, what else?"

He must have beaten her. Drunk. And his pay?

"If you're hungry," Ai said indifferently, "there are some of the morning's chappatis."

"I'm not hungry."

And the fair? And my bangles? She didn't dare ask the question for a while. Then it burst out of her.

"What fair? Isn't this fair enough for you? A drama every day at home. What more do you want? Selfish, irresponsible, like your father. He drinks away half his pay. And you want to go to the fair. And I? I wish I was dead."

She sat against the wall, knees drawn up to her chest, watching her mother with unwavering eyes. Until he came home. Still drunk. He kicked at Ai.

"Get up. Get up, you. I want my food."

"Baba, I'll. . ."

"No, not you. Your lazy slut of a mother. Get up, I said. I'm hungry."

She looked from face to face with the same unchildlike intensity. And Premi ran in. Unaware, lucky girl, of what was going on. Saying, "Shailatai, Shailatai, I'm coming with you. I'm coming also." Shaila had boasted in the morning, "I'm going to the Navaratri fair today."

"Going where?" Baba asked.

She did not reply. It was Ai who replied "They're your children. What do they care for me. They want to go to the fair."

"Let them go then. Who are you to stop them?"

"No, Baba, I. . ."

"Yes, Baba, I want to go. I'm going with Shaila."

"Shut up, Premi."

"You shut up, you slut. Here, Shaila, you go. Take Premi with you. How much money do you want?" He pulled some notes out of his pocket and handed her one. "Take this. Go on, now. Go."

It was a five-rupee note. She stared at it, Premi dancing beside her. "Let's go, Shailatai. Let's go."

And Ai looking at her like that. Not a word, but she knew what her eyes were saying. "Don't go. Don't spend the money. He's drunk. We won't have any money the whole month."

And yet. . . the fair. The bangles. And Baba pushing them out, not allowing them to speak, even to have a wash. What could she do but go? But all the way she could see Ai's eyes looking at her. Until they entered the fair. Then they disappeared and she was conscious of nothing, not

Continued on page 43

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"What is it, Shaila?" Ai looked at her. "Stop that nonsense. Crying like a baby? You're too big for it. Stop it."

When Baba came home she was silently squatting in front of the stove, roasting the chappatis. Ai so expertly rolled out. He sat down without a word. Ai served him just as silently, the rolling pin still held in one hand. By the time he finished, all the chappatis were done. She was gathering all the dirty vessels together for washing when he called out, "Shaila, water."

He saw her face. "Crying? What's wrong?"

"Wrong?" Ai got in first. "Troubling me, what else? Ten years old and still no sense."

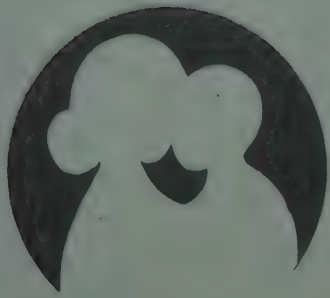
Perhaps something in the small undersized figure, carrying the

"I'll have my pay in three days. Then you can have your bangles."

She nodded, her face transformed, and ran out with a skip and a jump as if her father's words had made her a child again. Three days more!

And then it was the day. The knowledge came to her with the very moment of her waking. It stayed inside her patiently until school was over. Then she raced home, the satchel hurting her hip each time it banged against her. She was breathless when she reached home. She stood in the door and then tingled with apprehension. Something wrong. Ai sleeping. . . at this time of the day?

"Ai," she called out timidly. No response. "Ai," again.



FOCUSSING ATTENTION ON

# THE CHILD OF

Tara Ali Baig

If thirty years ago our country had focussed attention on the needs of children, our population might have been less, and our children a good deal healthier and more productive than they are today.

There are many reasons why it has been left to the Year of the Child to assess what we have done over the years and how much remains to be done. Perhaps the most important reason why real planning for our child population has been deficient, is that our social workers and planners have generally been modern people trained in systems derived from the West. Over the years adaptations have certainly been made and new forms of training established in India. All too often, however, programmes and projects, plan-

Therefore, if we are to effectively focus attention on the needs of India's 228 million children under 14 (according to the census of 1971; today it would be nearer 280 million), then we have to face the reality of our national priorities. Trained, effective manpower is the only possible way a country can grow to strength. But there must be the political will to achieve such an objective. Take the example of China.

In very simple terms, the needs of would be food, love, security, protection against a fair chance to learn, in order to



Pankaj Shah

ned by the 'experts,' look better on paper than they work in the field. Also, workers scorn village life, where the bulk of the problem lies, if they have half a chance of working in cities.

Therefore, health, education, nutrition, immunization, care of the handicapped and other such services are invariably better in urban centres than in rural. In fact, very few welfare agencies, operating from cities, have ever reached effectively into rural areas. As a result, child welfare is far from uniform.

With a far larger population and no external aid China was able to establish for working women, pre-schools and day-care centres, children's palaces on the Soviet model, nutrition, health, a simplified educational system covering 85 per cent of primary age group children, plus preventive health services. This was possible because the government of Chairman Mao recognized that no country can develop unless the work on the citizen is started from the time he is born.



Joseph St. Anne

# DAY

## ease and

Pankaj Shah

power, minerals, oceanic wealth, sun, forests and, above all, manpower that India has. And we harp on poverty! Yet the one most pernicious element that prevents us from capitalizing on this vast wealth is our own distrust of and inhumanity to each other. Somehow there is a streak in our national character that makes grace or generosity impossible in our dealings with each other. Whether this is within the family circle (parents and children), or the professional circle (superiors and inferiors), or the political circle (those in power or those outside it), the same envious ruthlessness prevails.

These deep-seated attitudes cannot be altered unless they are deliberately replaced by other values from a child's earliest years. While in a country the size of India this might seem impossible, the input into teacher training and then into the school itself could be a clear programme of making children responsible for each other. Care of the weaker, the handicapped, the slower student as an integral part of school life could introduce a new dimension in our dealings with each other. The chances are that teachers would welcome students taking over responsibility in classes. A new system of training boys to work for and serve others would also go a long way in changing the patterns of male arrogance planted in them firmly by their mothers.

There are two systems for bring-



J. K. Aggarwal

ing up children in our homes. A boy is brought up all too often pampered and indulged, gets 'seva' from the female members of his family, while the girl is normally less indulged and grows up with discipline, self-denial and training in thought for others. In the long run, the girls are better off and do not grow up so dependent since their expectations are extremely nominal. Much of the disorder,

disrepair and shabbiness of government offices, from municipalities to the Central government, for instance, is due in large measure to the faulty training of men to look after themselves and their immediate environment. While these things may appear trivial, they are actually of vital importance.

In the Year of the Child, it  
Continued on page 62

does not have the same  
as China, social or  
so this is not a model  
follow. All that it  
is that given the politi-  
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Pankaj Shah

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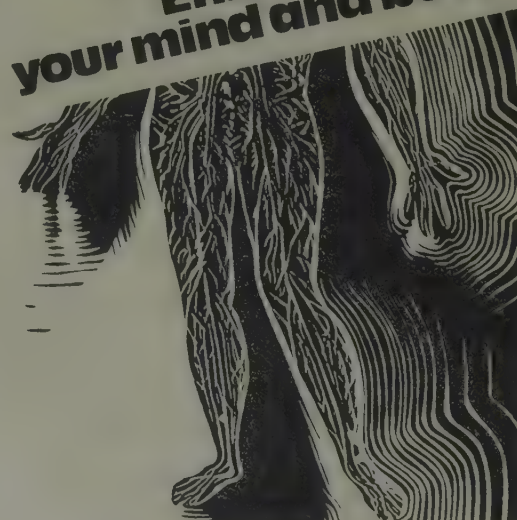
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# CHILD DELINQUENTS

Nirja Kumar

As a practising Clinical Psychologist numerous cases of behaviour problems of children are brought to me, most of them on charges of stealing, either at home or outside, playing truant, drinking liquor, drugging, sexual activities etc. Such a tendency towards violating social law at a young age if not controlled in time may lead to committing major crimes. Juvenile delinquency means an illegal act committed by a child under the statutory age (16-18 years). It may include all deviant behaviour among the young ranging from actions that are classed as criminal among adults, such as physical assault and robbery, to offences that are strictly age-related, such as drinking liquor and sexual activities.

Violation of law among young children is an alarming feature of today. Besides being a source of severe anxiety to parents and friends, it is also a threat to society. There is a curious apathy towards this problem among the adults. Most of them pass on the blame to others. Some say the child of today is perplexed with issues arising from the changing moral values. Others feel that the impact of today's films and television programmes is responsible. Parents blame the school and school teachers blame the parents, and so on.

The prevalence and nature of offences among boys and girls vary. In the case of boys, the major offences are truancy, stealing, fire setting, vandalism and cruelty to animals and humans. In girls the major offences are stealing, shoplifting and sexual promiscuity. The incidence is higher in males, it is higher in low income, minority and culturally deprived groups, and it rises with industrialisation and urbanisation.

## REASONS

Modern concepts of delinquency suggest that children who are called delinquents are ill primarily in terms of society, in their inability to conform to the social milieu. The social and cultural milieu is influenced by many factors — education, radio, film, television, socio-economic levels, minority and racial groups, poverty and threat of war, civil rights movements, immigration, etc. Any of the above conditions may be responsible for the maladaptive behaviour pattern of the child.

It is generally found that poverty and lack of education, lack of nutrition, lack of adequate



No child is born delinquent. If young, essentially innocent children turn to violence and crime, it is time we examine the reasons for their doing so. Let us help them now, instead of waiting for an opportunity to "cure" them

medical aid, etc., are responsible for the delinquent behaviour pattern among children from low-income groups. Among the higher and middle-class groups it is mainly the affect deprivation, adult overstimulation and inconsistent attitude towards the child that is responsible.

**Case A:** Master X, aged 12, son of a clerk was brought to me with the following complaints:

running away from home, violence and destructive tendencies. It was discovered by means of psychological tests and further reported by the psychiatric social worker that the atmosphere at home was not harmonious. The father of the child was frustrated with his job, and returned home unhappy. He took out his frustration on his wife and children. The wife unloaded her aggressions on the child. This inconsistency in the behaviour of the adult became an unhealthy model for the child. His behaviour was merely an imitation of adult behaviour.

**Case B:** Master Y, an intelligent boy of eleven, with a history of running away from home and stealing. It was found that Master Y, son of a peon, was extremely frustrated at home because of the lack of warmth and affection from parents. The father spent the family income on liquor. The working wife and the child were deprived of money, food and warmth. The child thus took to stealing

and running away from home. As the child was a good student he was brought by the school teacher for investigation.

**CASE C:** Miss X, aged 16, belonging to an extremely orthodox middle-class family, was brought with complaints of shoplifting and stealing. It was found that she was deprived of extra facilities of life. Although the parents could afford some luxuries and entertainment, they emphasised that only good food, sufficient clothing, books and shelter were enough for life. Seeing her friends in new clothes, having a variety of tiffin, going on outings, etc., she felt deprived. Her repressed desire for all this led to malformation of behaviour.

**CASE D:** Master X, aged about 17, coming from an educated middle-class family was brought with the complaints of acting out behaviour, pathological lying, running away from school, excessive beating, vandalism, eve-teasing, etc. The child admitted that he wanted to become a 'hero' and for that one had to do all this. Direct unhealthy impact of films on the tender mind.

One common feature among all these children is that they did not get the security they needed. Even well-read and sincere parents failed to provide necessary security, probably they themselves were insecure personalities. An American expert has rightly said that "abused children often become brutal parents, the violence repeating itself through generations of a single family." Such parents may be very sincere in wanting to provide their children a congenial home environment, but not having been brought up correctly themselves, they do not know the rudiments of child-rearing. Such parents either over protect or over-neglect the child.

Family dynamics also contribute a lot in forming a delinquent behaviour pattern. Jealous competition between children in the same family may lead to emotional difficulties. Generally, the arrival of a baby creates hostile reaction in the young child. At first it is vague and unformed, but soon the hostility becomes more apparent. Sometimes it is so strong that it causes the child to commit the most aggressive crimes. A boy strangled his little sister who was still in the cradle. Another boy cut his younger brother's throat with a razor. A four-year-old boy put fire under his baby brother's cot when he was asleep.

An 18 year old girl, who beat her 11 year old brother to death, told the police "my parents gave him more love than they gave me."

Continued on page 46

***Sumeet amazes housewives!***

***“It’s a complete kitchen machine  
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wider range of performance!”***

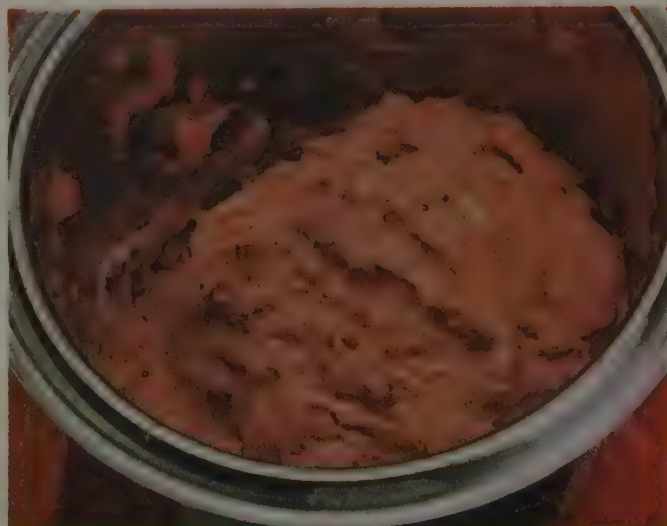
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Sumeet is also available without the kneading attachment in an economical pack: Sumeet Domestic. You can buy the kneading attachment separately too.

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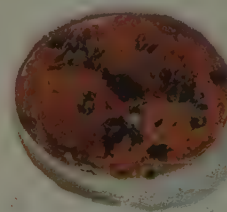


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A simple yet ingenious blade that comes with the stainless steel jar. Specially developed by the makers of Sumeet to mince meat in just 1 minute... to grate carrots, onions, coconut, nuts, in seconds. And even to crush ice quick-as-a-wink. Simply fantastic! To give you an idea of its versatility, here are a

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**Coconut Barfi** Grates coconut in seconds for your favourite recipes. Does the same for making carrot halwa and other preparations with cashewnuts, walnuts, almonds.



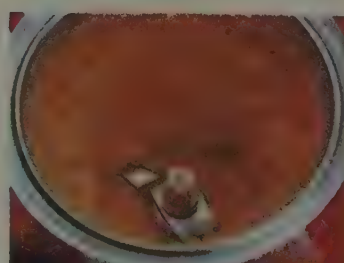
**Flavoured Ices** Crushes ice quick-as-a-wink for tempting ices which you can serve up in a variety of flavours. And makes ice-shavings for cocktails too.



Dry grind masalas in 3½ minutes!



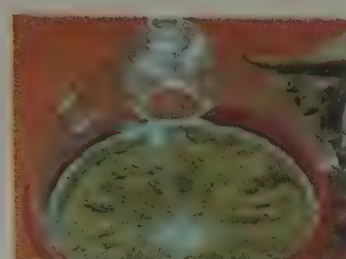
Wet grind dal in 3½ minutes!



Grate carrot in seconds.



Whip up lassi/fruit juice in just 1 minute!



Grind chutney in 2 minutes.



Knead atta in 2 minutes!  
Mix cake batter in 3½ minutes!

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# THE FIRST PERSON

Suma Chitnis

**It's The Mother. She is the one who ensures the child has satisfactory food, shelter and clothing. She is the one who moulds the child's basic habits and patterns of behaviour, defining the good and the evil, the beautiful and the ugly, the right and the wrong**



The role of the mother has been enuoligised in all societies and all cultures. Women may be subjugated as daughters, wives and even as sisters, but, across the world, they are venerated as mothers. Motherhood is respected because it, as it were, holds and unfolds the miracle of life. From the moment of conception the mother nurtures the life of her child to its fruition — first as an embryo in her womb, then as a babe in arms and as an infant, and finally through teenage and adolescence on to adulthood. Therefore, the Year of the Child must need also be a year for reckoning the part played by the mother in the life of the child.

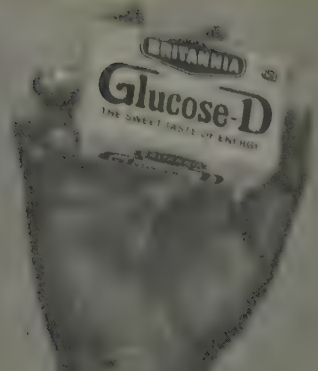
Motherhood actually involves three closely related, yet distinct, responsibilities towards the child. These may be grouped as the obligations towards the biological, the physical and the socio-psychological growth. Mother-



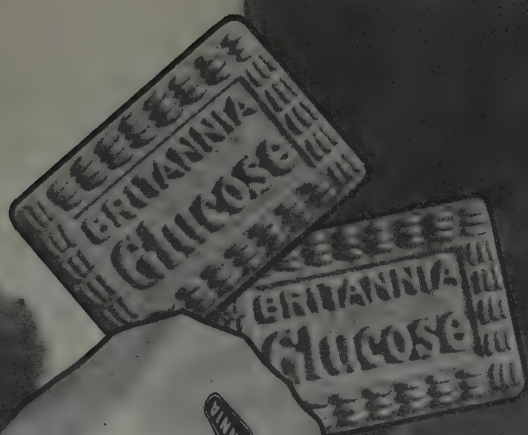
hood is fulfilled only when all three sets of obligations are adequately met. To what extent do most mothers fulfil all three sets of responsibilities towards their children? One wonders. In any case, by way of commitment to the objectives of the International Year of the Child, it would be pertinent for every responsible mother to ask whether she herself is doing justice to each of these obligations.

The biological responsibilities of the mother are largely crowded into the brief period between conception and childbirth. A mother must make sure that her posture, her nutrition, her bodily movements and her daily routine and activities are such as to facilitate her child's healthy growth within the womb. There is also the much more complex re-

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sponsibility regarding physical and mental disabilities that may be transmitted to the child. Where Rh factor problems are involved or where there are possibilities of hereditary transmission of disabilities, responsible parenthood calls for a careful consideration of how to avoid them and how to handle them if they nevertheless occur. In fact, where the risks of transmitting hereditary disease or defect are great, a couple may have to be prepared to deny itself the joy of procreation and accept adoption as an alternative.

## Care of foetus

The biological responsibility of motherhood — care of the foetus in the womb — and the handling of situations where the transmission of disease or defect is involved, require an intelligent and informed awareness on the part of the mother. Are Indian mothers, or mothers-to-be adequately aware and informed?

That the child in the womb needs to be taken care of is well accepted. But few women know how care may best be taken. For instance, knowledge of matters concerning nutrition during pregnancy is limited. Customary beliefs and notions regarding what expectant mothers may or may not eat or do continue to guide the mother-to-be. These beliefs generally contain good sense, but they are overlaid with superstition and confused thinking. As regards the more complex responsibility of guarding against transmissible disabilities, both awareness and knowledge are miserably lacking.

The mother's responsibilities for the growth of her child start with the birth of the child and extend all the way until the child becomes an adult. They include ensuring that the child has satisfactory food, shelter, clothing, and all the other material needs of the child. In fact, mothers may make a fetish of this responsibility and neglect the socio-psychological responsibility.

## Confrontation with culture

The socio-psychological responsibility of motherhood, simply understood, consists of providing emotional support and cushioning for the child. The love and warmth she showers on her child are the richest contributions that a mother makes to the child's growth. They protect the child from life's harsh experiences and enable it to learn to cope with the world. And yet warmth and love may be overdone. A good mother is one who manages to cushion her child without making it dependent, who engulfs it with warmth without smothering its capacity to cope with a world that is frequently cold.



Photograph: Jagdish Agarwal

While motherly love and warmth are thus crucial to the child, the requirements for the child's socio-psychological growth are far more complex. Human personality is a product of interaction with other personalities. In the course of this interaction individuals are exposed to and confronted with the 'culture' — values, knowledge, beliefs, and patterns of behaviour — of the society to which they belong. This interaction is particularly important through the formative years of infancy, childhood and youth, for that is the period during which the child absorbs and imbibes the culture in which it must eventually function, develops the attitudes in terms of which it later handles its life.

Inasmuch as the mother happens to be the first person with which the child interacts, she initiates the child into culture. She moulds the child's basic habits and patterns of behaviour, defines its core sense of the good and the evil, the beautiful and the ugly, the right and the wrong. She influences its attitudes and the formation of its temperament. As the sphere of the child's interaction grows to include the other members of the family and later on the neighbourhood, the school, the community, radio, cinema and television, it is the mother who

leads the child on to these wider spheres. These other entities begin to be more and more important in the child's formation but the mother is expected to help it integrate and resolve the contradictions that it encounters in confronting the varied demands of these different spheres.

And here lies the crux of the problem. In simple societies where life is highly homogeneous, the task of leading the child on to wider spheres is relatively simple. The world outside is, for the major part, an amplification of the home. In a sense, the neighbourhood, the peer group and the community only reinforce the culture of the home. But in complex societies the situation is different. Such societies are highly heterogeneous, made up of many dissimilar spheres. The mother may not be familiar with all these different spheres and even if she is, may not be able to integrate, for her child, the plurality into which it is thrown. Similarly, in societies that are in the process of change, the experiences of the mother and her concept of reality may be out of date and irrelevant for the child. In the circumstances the mother is unable to guide the child through its formation unless she consciously and intelligently relates herself to the task.

## Changing values

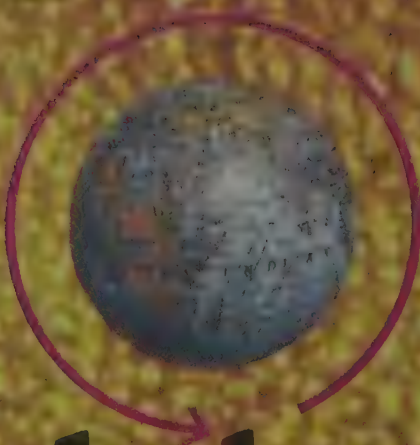
Until recently, plurality did not pose much of a problem in Indian society. The various regional, religious and caste cultures had a restricted impact. Interaction between these various cultures was limited and the lives of most people were confined to their own regional, religious or caste groups. Life was fairly static and norms, values and patterns of behaviour did not change visibly from one generation to another. All this has changed over the last few decades. With industrialisation and modernisation, the compartmentalisation of sub-cultures has disappeared. The children are confronted with heterogeneity and plurality of an order to which their mothers may never have been exposed. The Indian mother is called upon to equip her child for a world which is totally different from the one that she has known, and is still changing rapidly.

## Challenging task

Are mothers in our society equipped to nurture the socio-psychological growth of their children in these circumstances? Do they know how to inculcate in them the new values of democracy, equality, individual freedom, dignity of work, rationality, secularism? These are serious questions, but questions that every responsible mother must ask of herself.

In fact, the Indian mother must ask herself a much more basic question concerning her role. Traditionally, in Indian families most of the responsibilities for the growth of the child were shared by grandparents, uncles, aunts, elder siblings and other relatives. As the size of the family shrinks this help becomes unavailable — also perhaps unacceptable — and mothers must cope with motherhood more and more on their own. What are the adaptations that they must make in order to cope? Could fathers be drawn in to take a more active interest in the child than they did in the traditional home?

Motherhood in Indian society has grown to be far more challenging a task than it used to be and also more exciting. It is important that mothers apply themselves more consciously, more purposively, and more intelligently to their task. Awe inspiring? But then wasn't it said that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world? Surely the role of the ruler must inspire awe, to say the least.

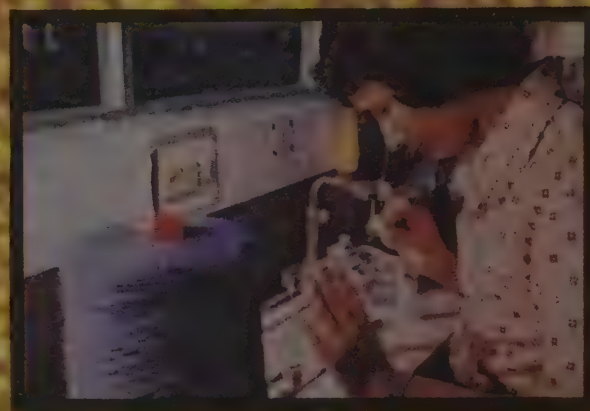


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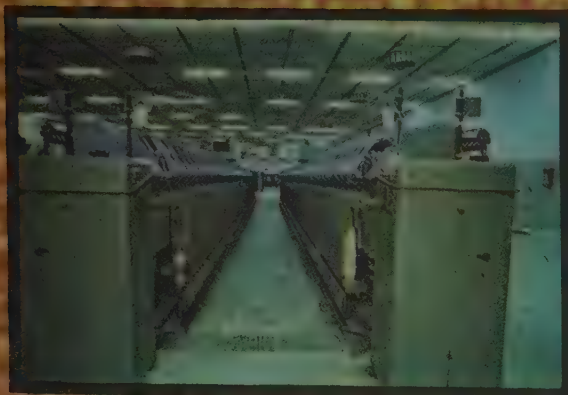


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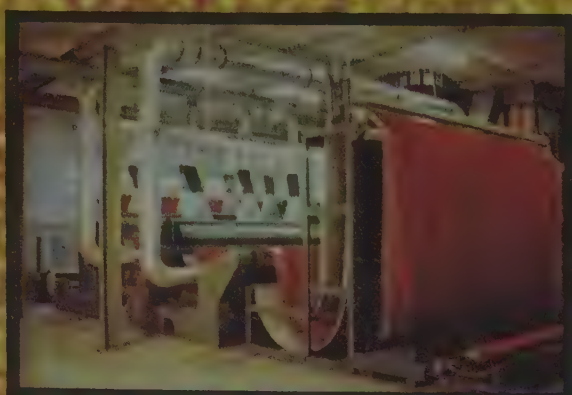
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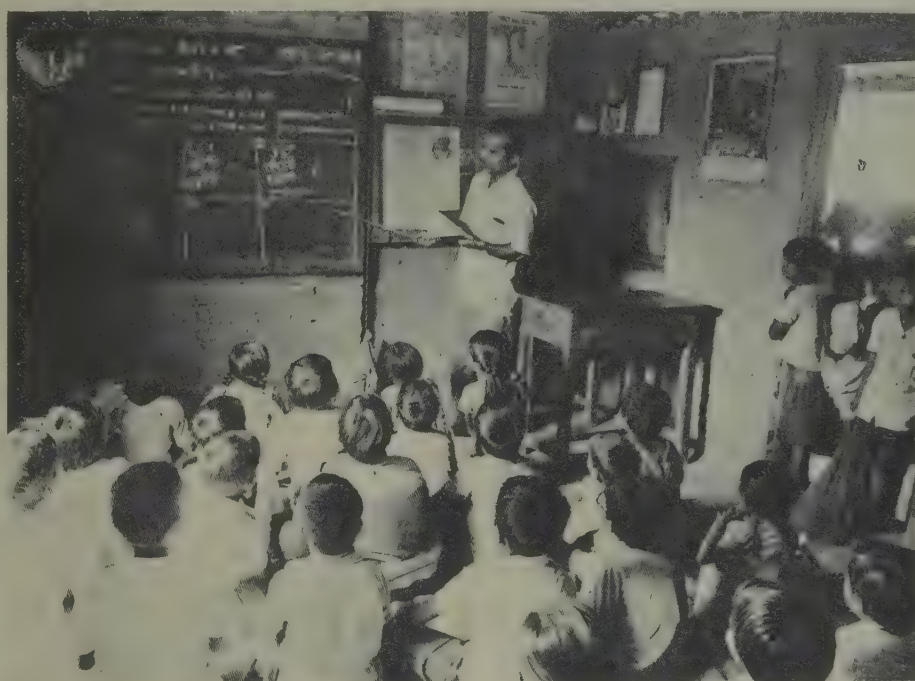
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If education is the birthright of children, let us bring it within their reach. Of what use is 'free' or 'compulsory' education, when 'most of our children cannot even afford a book or a slate or a pencil'?

Armaity S. Desai



keep the children interested and involved; the children are easily bored and drop out. In Maharashtra alone there are 1,300 villages with fewer than 200 persons each where there are no primary schools. There are 18,000 single teacher schools in the state. It is estimated that in Maharashtra alone, 21 lakhs of children in the age group of nine to 14 are out of school.

#### METHODS OF TEACHING AND THE CLASS-ROOM ATMOSPHERE

Teaching continues to be by rote-learning and copying from the blackboard. Clay, colour chalk, flash cards, charts, are rarely seen, especially in the rural schools. Projects, activity-oriented and problem-solving types of educational methods are rarely, if ever, utilised. In remote areas, the teacher takes attendance once a month and disappears for the rest of the time. The school house remains locked. This was the situation in a tribal village near Thane. If this is so in an area so close to Bombay, the situation in backward and largely inaccessible areas of the country may be imagined.

LEFT: In villages there is often only one teacher for the four grades, and sometimes he teaches two grades at a time.

BELOW: Eagerness and curiosity, slowly killed by rote-learning and lack of facilities. In Maharashtra, 21 lakhs of children in the 9-14 age group are out of school.

UNICEF / T. S. Satyan

# THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

law of compulsory enrolment. Additionally, the funds appropriated by the local authority are based on these figures of enrolment, and not the actual number of children who survive the school year. Hence, the numbers supposedly in school are grossly inflated. In the Sixth Plan, this is sought to be corrected by obtaining average attendance and not just the enrolment of children.

In actuality, the number of children who drop out is 50 to 60 per cent between classes I to V or primary school in both rural and urban India, except for a few states like Kerala. If the total child population in this age group is 887 lakhs, the number of children who dropped out is nearly 532 lakhs or 60 per cent in that age group. As reported in the Sixth Plan document, the

enrolment in classes VI to VIII for children between the ages of 11 to 14, was only 40 per cent of those who dropped out from school. The document states that only 25 per cent of secondary school age children (IX to XI) continue to that stage of education.



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# THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION



## Relevance to the child's Experience:

The syllabus itself is not relevant to the needs of the child population. For instance, the same reading primers are prescribed in all schools in Maharashtra. Hence, the content taught may have no relevance to the child's immediate environment. An urban child sees buses, cars, aeroplanes, films. A rural child sees farmers, sheafs of corn, ploughs and cattle. The first picture introduced and the first words learnt should relate to persons and objects in the child's environment.

Some social workers, in an experiment, showed the first standard primer to second standard children living in an urban slum. They had already completed the primer the year before. Their interpretations of the pictures were revealing. The bullocks harnessed to the plough were explained as cows being tied to the wood so they would not run away or kick the man. The farmer, with sheafs of corn on his shoulder, was a seller of brooms (jhadoowalla). The deer was recognised as a goat. All the children recognised the picture of Mahatma Gandhi, but when asked who he was, none could reply. Eventually, one child explained that he was an old man who stayed down her street but presently had gone to his village!

Most of our educational planners come from the middle class and are urban educated. They also have a false concept of equal opportunity in education. Equal opportunity is regarded by them as exposure to exactly the same content, irrespective of the child's life situation and needs. This results in lack of comprehension, rote-learning, and ultimately failure because the child cannot retain such learning.

## Scope of the Syllabus:

Besides the content of the syllabus, it is also necessary to examine the pressures it brings on the child. A majority of our children do not attend nursery schools or balwadis. Their first experience of education is in the first year of school. Hence, there is slow development in the first and even the second year. Yet, expectations at the point of entry are so high that the child cannot cope with the syllabus. Because the majority of our children are from low-income families, and are often first generation learners, or children of parents with only primary education, they are ill-prepared for formal school. The first two grades, especially, therefore, should use

the more non-formal approaches developed for pre-primary school children. In experiments tried with children from urban slums, a dramatic difference in attendance, and in performance, was observed when pre-primary methods of teaching were utilised even for the existing syllabus.

In education, the focus should be on the learner and not the content. However, because of the pressure on teachers to complete the syllabus, the focus is on the latter. Hence, on top of the high dropout rate, sometimes as high as 30 per cent in the very first grade, there is also a high rate of failure with its disastrous effects on the child.

Education for the children of the poor, illiterate masses in India is beset, therefore, with the problems of wastage (dropout) and stagnation (failure). Since most of these children attend school for less than four years, they lapse into illiteracy, resulting in wastage of both manpower and financial resources. India has among the highest illiteracy rates in the world (70 per cent).

## Need for Vocational Bias

Because a majority of our children are from poor homes,

there is some expectation that education will equip the child for a vocation. Most rural schools do not incorporate subjects related to rural occupations, so that the child who leaves school has an academic preparation which has no relevance to the developmental needs of rural communities.

If some vocational training is introduced earlier even children who drop out will have some training and those who continue will have an opportunity of making a more intelligent choice. In Bombay, we have hundreds of children from families of fishermen and yet there is no syllabus of relevance to them. The parents, therefore, see little reason to send their children to school.

In a family of fishermen, a girl's education was terminated after class VII. A social worker approached the parents to persuade them to let her continue to high school as she ranked among the top children in her class. The mother refused saying that after S.S.C. her daughter would refuse to sit with a basket of fish in the local market. Education must prepare for a vocational objective which parents can see as an economic goal.

## PROBLEMS ARISING FROM POVERTY OF THE CHILD'S FAMILY

The second broad area which leads to the problem of wastage and stagnation is poverty and its effects on the child and his fa-



UNICEF / T. S. Satyan

ABOVE: Play is part of the learning process, but where even the basic teaching aids are lacking the teacher is hard-pressed to keep the children interested and entertained.

LEFT: Since the majority of our schoolchildren come from poor families, they are malnourished and listless. They do not even have sufficient clothes.



mily. There is motivation to educate the child when the parents have had some history of education, or have perceived the worth of education in the achievements of others in the community, and are willing to undergo immense personal sacrifice. They must also have hope that present sacrifices will yield future rewards. None of these factors operate in the lives of our poor masses. Another major factor is the parents' capacity to bear the expense on education. While education is free, many of our children cannot even afford a book, a slate or a pencil. They are malnourished and listless. They do not even have sufficient clothes. Where children have to earn for the family, there is little opportunity for making education the work of childhood.

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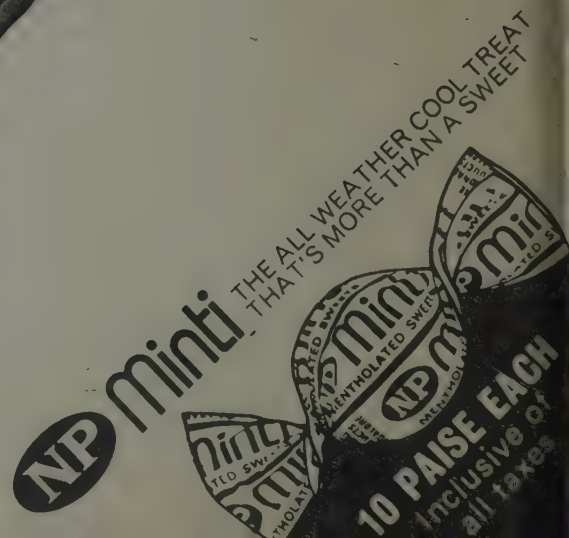
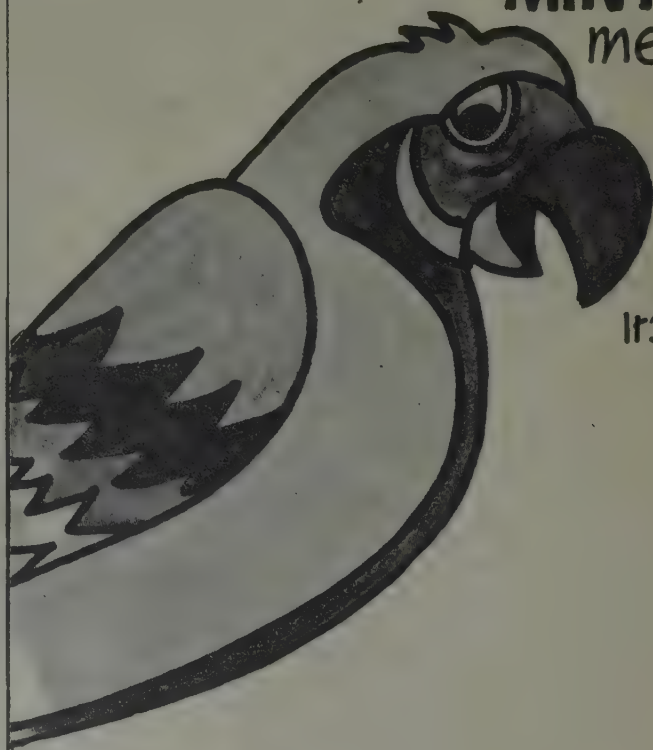
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# THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION



In urban slums, there is lack of electricity, overcrowding and noise. The child, therefore, has no facilities to do his homework, and no adults to guide him. Constant shifting of families also interrupts a child's education. Such shifting is common both in urban and rural areas, and is linked to the availability of jobs. Some of it is the result of relocation of slums in the middle of the school year.

We have suggested some remedies in the educational system to prevent wastage and stagnation. Similarly, we need to suggest some means of stemming the wastage and stagnation resulting from the problems of poverty. In urban areas most of these children are from families of casual labourers. In rural areas, they are the children of landless labourers, marginal farmers, migrant workers and scheduled caste and tribal families. The educational system must underwrite the economic cost of sending the child to school. The schools must provide clothing, books and other educational equipment and at least one meal. Wherever I have been in Maharashtra, the village teacher or the parents have said that these were the major perquisites for the children to remain in school. In our own experiments, we have seen that in primary school, the additional cost is likely to be only, approximately, Rs. 13 to Rs. 14 per child per month. The average cost of clothing is between Rs. 40 and Rs. 45 for two sets a year; for books, it is Rs. 15 (approximately) in the first few grades; and a mid-day meal is around 30 paise per child. If we value our children, it is not too high a cost to mobilise resources to provide these services to the children of families of at least the lowest 40 per cent income groups. In addition, keeping the school open after school hours for recreation and evening study adds to the necessary facilities for children, especially those in middle and high schools.

## PROGRAMMES FOR DROPOUTS AND THOSE NEVER ADMITTED TO SCHOOL

Many children who have already dropped out of the system or never entered it must be brought into it. Similarly, children who work but should not do so at this age, cannot be wished away by compulsory school attendance legislation. Either we compensate their parents for that amount or provide part-time non-formal education. The Sixth Plan has given some thought to the needs of dropouts

and employed children and made some allocations for their non-formal education.

## Cost of Education

Laying the foundations of a literate society begins with the provision of free and compulsory education, and adequate financial allocation is required for this. While the First Plan allocated 63 per cent of the total outlay for education in primary schools, there was a fall in the allocation in the subsequent plans — 41 per cent in the Second Plan, 50 per cent in the Third Plan, 30 per cent in the Fourth Plan, and 43 per cent in the Fifth Plan. Secondary and higher education received a disproportionately larger emphasis, since we have seen that only 20 to 25 per cent survive into secondary schools, and



Can we bring a little more light into their lives?

fewer still go for higher education. This means that the relatively more advantaged population has continued to benefit from the public exchequer. This problem has been sought to be remedied in the Sixth Plan which has allocated about half the expenditure on education for the six to 14 age group (primary and middle school). Even this is not enough.

The expenditure per child varies, but it is usually not more than about Rs. 360 per child per year in Greater Bombay, and Rs. 108 in the zilla parishads in Maharashtra. Almost 90 per cent of the recurring costs are said to be spent on the salaries of teachers. This leaves a very small amount for other activities such as buying education material for use in the classroom. Unless zilla parishads and municipal

corporations appropriate larger sums for education, the future appears dim. As it is, education has one of the lowest allocations in our state and national budgets. In the Sixth Plan, only 13.5 per cent of the total is allocated for education, health and family welfare (planning), housing and urban development, water supply, social welfare and nutrition, backward classes welfare, Harijan welfare, rehabilitation, labour welfare, and other unclassified items. Of the Rs. 9,355 crores allocated to the social services, the share of education is Rs. 1,955 crores, or about 20 per cent. The same situation is reflected in the education plans of the states.

At the local level the amounts vary. The Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay allocated in 1977 20 per cent of its annual budget to educate children in its 1,149 primary and middle schools (grades I to VII) and 50 secondary schools. There are 615,273 primary and middle school children and 68,000 children in secondary schools; 16,049 teachers in the primary and middle schools, and 2,500 in the secondary schools. The government aids

## CHILD DELINQUENTS

Continued from page 35

Keeping in view the various reasons underlying the delinquent behaviour pattern of our children, it is absolutely necessary to protect them from committing further crimes. Prevention can be done at two levels. Primary, to treat those children who begin to show the initial signals and secondary, to rehabilitate the convicted children.

Early detection and treatment of illness is very essential. As soon as the child begins to show the signs, he should be attended to by an expert. Individual psychotherapy and counselling of parents should be done and as far as possible the causal environmental factors should be removed. At this stage it is possible to cure the child at home in the family.

In the case of convicted children, it is necessary to separate them from the environment they are living in. They need to be institutionalised for psychological treatment and rehabilitation.

In India hardly any facilities are available for such children. There are some remand homes for convicted cases where the child is kept under expert supervision. Here he is not punished, but is given an opportunity for education and treatment. However, neither the facilities nor the implementation is adequate and the child is hardly benefited. There is need for a special kind of institution for such children. Still more important, there should be trained, efficient and dedicated experts to take care of them.

In the absence of proper institutions, prevention of delinquency is not possible. Vast numbers of school dropouts have nowhere to go. They are neither wanted at home nor can be accommodated in normal schools. Sometimes, even treatment is not possible, particularly in cases where family dynamics are the causative factor. It is difficult, if not impossible, to control the disturbing personality variables of the parents of the child.

In India, remand homes and correctional schools are run by the government authorities and facilities are available only to convicted children, particularly to those who have committed serious crimes. The others face neglect and apathy, i.e., until they commit a crime, when the 'correctional' machinery is set in motion. The 'cure' would not be necessary if preventive steps were taken in time.

It is rightly said: "Tomorrow's mentally disturbed and prospective delinquents are in today's homes and schools. Helping them now will do a lot more good than sending them to an institution later."

# What We Can Do For Our Children

Continued from page 9

## SURINDER SAINI

Chairman, Social Welfare  
Advisory Board,  
New Delhi.

Surinder Saini, at a recent meeting of the voluntary organisations of Delhi, appealed to them to work for enrolling children in schools. There are several primary schools where education and nutrition are provided free. Yet these schools are hardly half-full.

Miss Saini feels that one of the reasons children shun school is lack of clothing. Recently it was decided to have the same uniform in all the government schools. "This is a step towards national integration and will avoid economic disparities." She also feels that all schools should have free medical aid, regular check-ups, and a balanced nutrition programme. Stressing the need for more recreational centres, hobby centres, libraries and gymnasiums she says, the public and voluntary organisations can help in creating them.

Another idea of hers is to organize Holiday Camps for children in various states and hill stations. The basis of a Happy Family is Family Planning: only if there are few children can their physical and emotional needs be met. "And only then we shall see the smile on every child's face. We have coined a slogan for the Year of the Child: BACCHE KI MUSKAN, DESH KI SHAAN — A child's smile is a Nation's Pride."



## PADMA SETH

Director, Bal Bhavan,  
New Delhi.

"Health and nutrition though very important are not the only needs of a child. His emotional needs, the sense of security, the freedom to think creatively are just as important, and these are exactly what Bal Bhavan is striving to meet," said Padma Seth. As soon as the children are out of nursery classes, they are thrown at the mercy of academic activity, and their creative activity either takes a second place or is completely stifled under the weight of examinations.

She wants Bal Bhavan to become the type of school where a child's ability is judged not by his excellence in exams, but by his creativity — be it in the field of music, drama, literature, science or anything else. "I want the children in the Bhavan to have a sense of identification with the institute so that they feel free to put forward any ideas they have, without the fear of ridicule."

At the Bal Bhavan, where there are children from five to 16 years old, there is a music section, an animal and bird section, a handicrafts section, a physical training section, a dance and drama section, a recreation centre and three departments of the science section — electronics, inventions, and biology & botany.



Padma Seth wants mini-Bal Bhavans all over the country with similar facilities. Delhi has already decided to have a chain of mini-Bal Bhavans.

Pushpa Hans

## A PAIR OF BANGLES

Continued from page 31

even Premi's hot sticky hand in hers. Only the sounds. The film songs coming over the loudspeaker making her feel so gay. The laughter. The well-dressed people. And the lights which like magic turned people into something else. Even her shabby blue skirt was transformed. And there were five rupees in her hand. The bangles.

"I want popcorn, Shailatai. And I want ice-cream. Shall we have batata vadas? And I want to drink that thing. Shailatai, buy me that doll."

"Sssh, Premi, if you don't keep quiet I won't buy you anything." Premi's mouth opened wide. Desperately she shook her. "Stop that. If you cry you won't get one thing. If you're quiet and good I'll buy you ice-cream. Anything." The bangles first. She saw the bangles' stall. What a crowd! But she was so small it was not difficult to wriggle through pulling Premi along with her. Her eyes flew wildly over the pillars of sparkling colour.

She had to ask three times before the man heard her. So many women and girls, all talking loudly. But none of them existed for her. Only the bangles she wanted, only the man who would give them to her.

At last he heard her. "Which ones?"

"Those."

He scarcely glanced at them, his indifferent look skimming over her treasures. "Two rupees a pair." Two rupees? That liar, that boaster Kusum.

"I want one pair. My size," she said loudly, afraid she would be misunderstood and he would give Premi's size. For Premi kept saying, "For me. For me also, Shailatai. I want bangles. I want those bangles."

"Sssh, shut up. Otherwise, no ice-cream."

I won't eat anything myself. Just the bangles for me. And ice-cream and batata vadas for Premi. The rest of the money I'll take home. For Ai's eyes were in front of her again. Angry, accusing. Getting between her and the bangles. Lucky Premi. She would eat the ice-cream without anything to spoil her fun. Why should she only... She almost gave up the bangles. Then she looked at them again.

"Let's see your size."

She stretched out her hand. He squeezed her palm in his huge, soft hand. "Hmm."

As he withdrew his hand she put the five rupee note into it. "Here," she said. "Now give me the bangles." But he was dealing with some older girls. As he served them she kept jumping, "That red pair for me. That red pair."

At last he turned to her. He got out the box and picked out a pair. He pushed them up her wrist. She exhaled one long breath of rapture.

"Shailatai," Premi pinched her

to get her out of her absorption.

"Show me. Show them to me. I want bangles also."

"Don't be a pest, Premi! I'll give you ice-cream. Come on." As she moved her hands, the little bells tinkled. She heard the enchantingly tiny sound above all the din and stopped. "Look, Premi."

She held her wrist to Premi's ear and gently shook it. Premi's woebegone face split into a smile. "Do it again." The two children stood there listening to the tiny tinkle, smiling at each other.

"Come, let's go." She felt guilty. "I'll buy your ice-cream." She was trying to squeeze through the crowd again when the man's voice arrested her. "Hey, baby, where are you going?" Suddenly she remembered. She hadn't taken the change from him. Thank God, she remembered. Or else...

"Give me the money for the bangles," he said at the same moment.

"I paid you," she said. "I gave you five rupees. You must give me three rupees."

The man shook his head, not angry, just impatient, his hand still held out, the palm soft and squishy, the lines going deep inside it like cuts.

"Don't try to fool me, Baby. Come give me the money."

"But, but... I gave you five rupees. You must give me three back. You put the five rupees in that box."

He held out the box to her. So many five rupee notes. Which

one was hers? How could she identify it? People were staring now. "Oh, let the kid go," someone said. "You don't know these kids," the man said. "They're very smart at cheating others. 'I've paid you' they say and keep the money for themselves. Come, baby, give me the money or give back those bangles."

"But I paid you... I paid you..." she stammered again and again, not knowing what else to say. So many people and nobody to say, "She's speaking the truth. I saw her paying you." None of them believed her. Or maybe none of them cared. Where was that friend of hers now... that woman who was always on her side? No, even she was not there. There was no one.

"I paid you five rupees," she said once more.

"Liar," the man calmly said. Someone laughed. She looked around in horror and fear. She felt as if the lights, the sounds, which had seemed so magical a little while back were converging on her menacingly. And faces too. The shopkeeper, Baba, Ai, Gup-tebai... how had all of them come here? She was terrified. Panic rose in her. She opened her mouth to scream, feeling surrounded by enemies. Then she closed it again. No one would hear her. She held out her hands mutely to the man. Perhaps the bells tinkled again but she didn't hear them. She began to sob. Beside her Premi, unable to understand, totally bewildered, sensing her sister's terror, began to howl

**If you've got  
a cute top,  
here's how to  
get a cute  
bottom.**

**Exercise two**  
Match your short and  
assy top with these free-  
locking harem pyjamas.  
Now clap your hands—  
you're looking great!

**Exercise one**  
Touch your toes in  
this flirtatious, frilly look.  
A sunny print with  
a hint of lace. It's good  
for your figure.



**Exercise three**  
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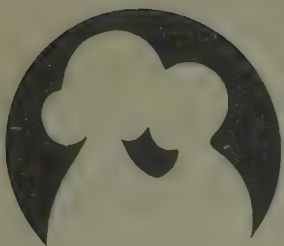
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Barbara Johnson is great — she's a lot



When a child shows precociousness between two and three years of age, his parents are delighted. "My Raju is so clever! He seems far ahead of other boys of his age." Later, if the child quietens down in the company of others at the kindergarten level, the parents do not attach any significance to it. But as he proceeds through primary school and appears dull and apathetic in comparison with his classmates, or worse, gets identified as a trouble-maker, his parents begin to worry about him and wonder: "Where has Raju's brilliance gone?"

What most parents (and teachers) don't realise is that to be gifted is to be at a disadvantage. For these children are part of a society which does not allow them to move ahead as fast as they would like to. With an intelligence quotient (I.Q.) of 130 and more, and a built-in need for exploration plus a drive for perfection, such children can get through their lessons so quickly that they have all the time in the world for mischief as well as the leadership ability to get others into trouble. They are misunderstood at home and ridiculed in the classroom for being 'different'. Gifted children are more sensitive than normal children and sometimes being unable to adjust to the environment in which they live, they become lifelong misfits, with special psychological problems of their own.

How can we help such children? First, by identifying them. A gifted child shows alertness and quickness of response, coupled with tremendous curiosity in all that is happening around him. This can be made out from the quality and quantity of the questions asked by him. He easily absorbs knowledge and information, and retains it without much effort. He is highly imaginative and easily excels in whatever he tries his hand at. He probes into problems far ahead of his age and he has the ability to discover and correct his own mistakes.

Nearly three to five per cent of the pupils in an average school can be considered gifted. But the special abilities which they demonstrate early in life need a catalyst in the form of an understanding parent or elder in the house and, more important, a sympathetic teacher in the school. The average teacher struggling with the heavy syllabus and the crowded classrooms may spot the talented child, but he rarely has the time or the energy to develop the special aptitudes of

such a child. And the student? He cannot reach his maximum potential because he was not suitably challenged. Later in life, he may bemoan his fate.

To speak of gifted children as a socially disadvantaged minority group may appear ridiculous when you consider that approximately 92 million children in India live below the poverty line (UNICEF statistics). But when you deny opportunities to a gifted child, it is not merely the child's loss but a drain of "brain wealth" on a national scale, in terms of leadership abilities lost

There are, no doubt, too many basically disadvantaged children in the country. But it would be well to remember that gifted children are a minority group, just as disadvantaged as any other. It would be a mistake to neglect this minority

Kishori Gopalkrishnan



# THE GIFTED CHILDREN



Photographs: UNICEF/T. S. SATYAN

**ABOVE:** Not much to build on: However gifted a child may be, there is little done in India to identify him and encourage him. In the rural areas, where even basic education suffers, who has the time or resources to spot and encourage a talented child?

**LEFT:** Can you spot the gifted one? Three to five per cent of students in a school are gifted — curious, imaginative, intelligent beyond their age. A national asset that is generally allowed to waste away.

among the citizens of tomorrow.

Taking note of this vital factor, many nations have been paying special attention to the education of gifted children. The Second Conference of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, held at San Francisco earlier this year, was attended by representatives from 25 countries. And at the University of Washington the Centre for the Study of Gifted Children is developing various approaches to identifying and educating such children

The National Association for Gifted Children, U.K., had sponsored the First World Conference on Gifted Children in London, in September 1975. Israel has been conducting special classes for gifted children within regular schools — an experiment which could be tried out in Indian schools. And of course, we have much to learn from the USSR, which has always given preferential treatment to children in its programmes.

What is being done for the

gifted children of India? "Very little," laments Mr. I.B. Kakar, Principal of the N.D.M.C. Navyug School at New Delhi. At the government level, we have the National Talent (for humanities) and the National Science Talent scholarships under the auspices of the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) which selects and provides special coaching to talented students at summer schools in reputed universities. Recently, however, there have been allegations that an unusually large number of college students selected for such scholarships belong to Delhi and what — worse, reports from nine summer school direc-

Continued on page 61



A PHOTO ESSAY BY RAGHU RAI

# EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT...





- *to affection, love and understanding*
- *to adequate nutrition and medical care*
- *to free education*
- *to a name and nationality*
- *to special care, if handicapped*
- *to be among the first to receive relief in disaster*
- *to learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities*
- *to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood*
- *to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, national, or social origin*



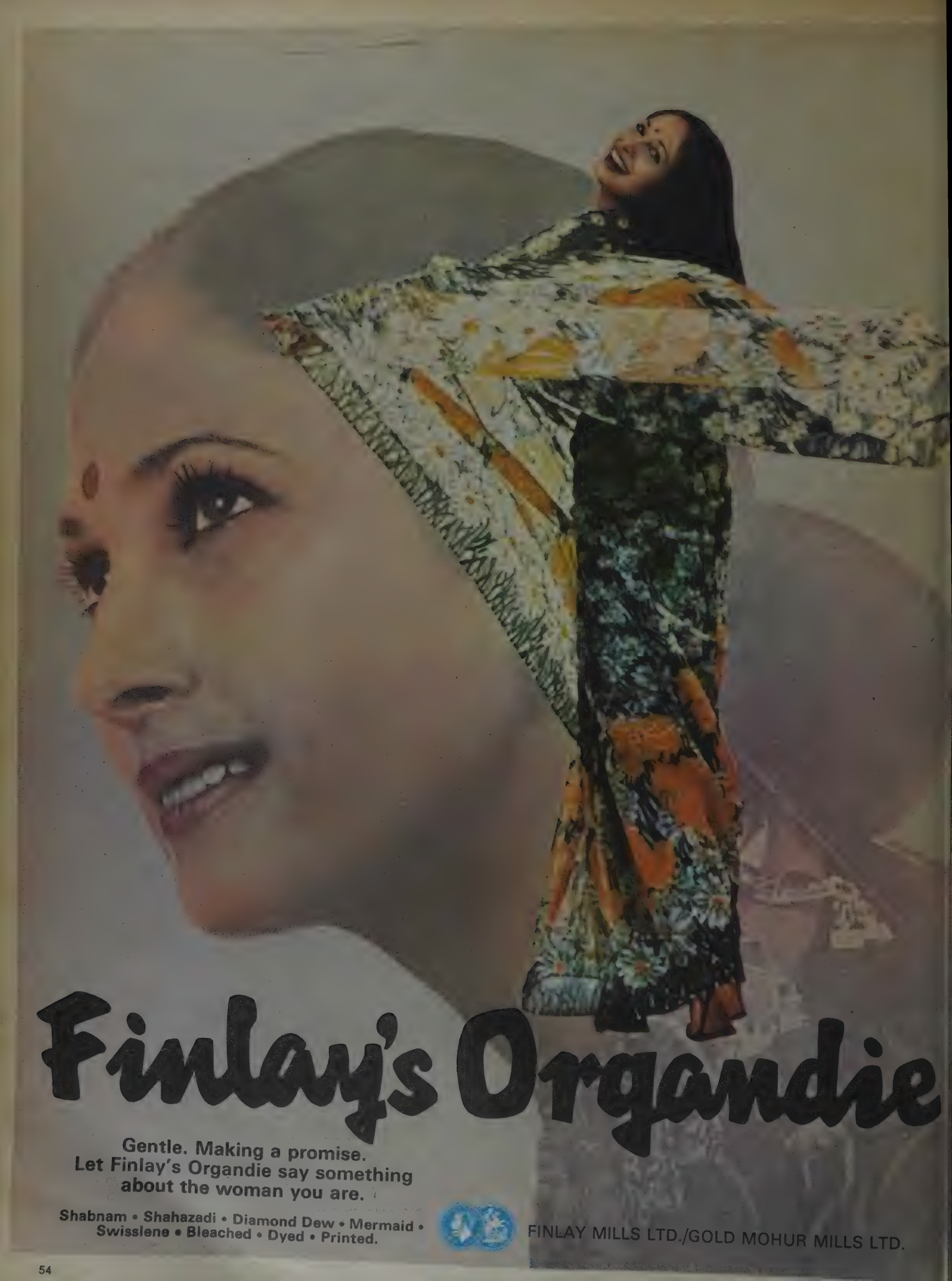


EVERY CHILD  
HAS  
THE RIGHT...



*"What is needed is a conscious realization of the inhuman conditions in which many children live today and a collective determination to improve these conditions as a matter of the greatest urgency. If the world so desires, its children can grow into healthier and happier people able to serve and to be proud of their societies."*





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## REACHING THE UNREACHED CHILD?

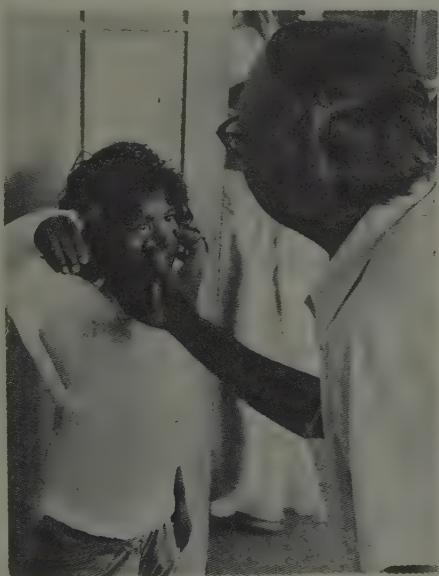
Continued from page 23

"The child's entire mental and physical future is decided by its nutrition during those first five years of life. Do we have enough food for him? Till now 'nutrition' has only meant distributing iron-folic acid tablets and vitamin A solutions. That's no Maternal and Child Health care. That's just throwing dust into people's eyes. I'm not prepared to accept this as MCH. 'Nutrition' means seeing that every child receives enough proteins, enough carbohydrates, enough fats, enough vitamins and minerals, and so on. But we've never been able to satisfy the needs of our children. Let this country realise that if it cannot provide every child with nutritious food, then it has loused up its job. MCH does not, and cannot stop, doling out iron-folic acid tablets and vitamin A solutions — there has got to be 100 per cent coverage on every child's health and nutrition. There should be no patch-work approach. Every child should get free food from the state.

"Now, I quite realise this is easier said than done. Take the situation in cities like Bombay for instance. Unlike in villages,

urban communications and facilities here help in taking health care to mothers and children. As to the three basic necessities — food, clothing and shelter — urban mothers and children are slightly better off than their rural counterparts, at least as far as the first two are concerned. Food and clothing is not that much of a problem in our cities as in our villages, because of the greater number of gainfully employed persons. Conversely, housing is a more acute problem here than in the villages.

"The resulting urban slum has generated a set of living conditions of the most appalling kind. It would be no exaggeration to



UNICEF / T. S. Satyan

say that our slum children are begotten, born, live and die in sewage. In villages the extent of MCH problems is greater, say about 60 to 75 per cent, whereas only about 25 per cent of the urban populace — the slum segment — suffers from these problems.

"How are we trying to deal with this situation? Well, we have special nutrition programmes for municipal school children. Then we also have immunisation programmes, which again are on a much better organised footing than in villages. There are a number of feeding centres in the city, particularly in the slum areas, run by the Social Welfare Board, with help from the government. These centres feed about 100,000 toddlers with milk and bread daily. But all this is not enough. We can say we have made a beginning — but that's all. Thus, while Bombay's toddler population is about one million, we cater to only 100,000 of them.

"I said before that every child should get free food from the state. Let us calculate what this would actually mean in terms of funds. Nearly 40 per cent of Bombay's children go to municipal schools, about 500,000 of them. Let us presume we gave each of them one square meal a day, a square meal costing the authorities about one rupee. As-

suming 200 working days a year, this works out at Rs. 1 crore. Multiply that by 100 for the whole of India and you get Rs 100 crores every year. This is the price for assuring every child one square meal a day. Where are such funds to come from?

"To conclude, I can only stress that we have failed our children on three important fronts (1) Parenthood (2) Health and Nutrition and (3) Socialisation. And our children are paying for our failures. If the International Year of the Child is to have any meaning at all, it should strive to achieve something concrete on these three fronts."

Interview with Dr. P. M. Shah, Professor and Head, J. J. Hospital for Children, Bombay

"Like many other aspects of health in India, children's health and nutrition pose more of a problem in our villages. I will cite just one bit of statistics to bring home the magnitude of this problem: at present in a given 'block' of villages (with a total population of about 100,000) there are roughly 13,000 deaths every year. Of these 13,000 deaths, as many as 500 — and even as

Continued on page 57

## THE KASA PROJECT

The Kasa Mother-Child Health-Nutrition Project (sponsored by the Government of India, Government of Maharashtra, and CARE, Maharashtra) was begun on December 2, 1974, "with the aim of developing an economical system of delivering integrated health and nutrition services to young children and mothers throughout rural India".

The area chosen for the project was that of the Kasa Primary Health Centre (PHC) which has about 70 villages in the Saiwan tribal community block (CD). Kasa is about 130 km from Bombay. It is served by one PHC and several sub-centres, the furthest village of the block being 40 km from the PHC and 12 km from a sub-centre. The area represents rural India in its typical features—no electricity, poor roads, high illiteracy rate, poor per capita incomes.

The project centred on a new cadre of health personnel chosen from among the villagers themselves. They were called Part-Time Social Workers (PTSWs). To quote Dr. P.M. Shah, "To bridge the gap between the Auxiliary

Nurse Midwife (ANM) and the community, 28 PTSWs were recruited from the local villages. The ANMs and health workers formed a cadre of immediate supervisors for the PTSWs who covered about 2,000 inhabitants each—on an average, two villages—and worked four to five hours a day. They received an honorarium of Rs. 80 per month. They provided health and nutrition care to all under-sixes and married women, and identified 'at risk' children and pregnant women."

How were the PTSWs chosen? "At the onset of the project the programme was explained to the local communities and they were asked to suggest candidates from the villages. Emphasis was placed on selecting local middle-aged mothers with about seven years of schooling, and having leadership qualities and a desire to serve the community. The educational qualifications and age specifications were lowered for a person who was dynamic and demonstrated leadership ability."

How were the PTSWs trained?

"The initial training lasted four weeks. The training included child growth and development, nutritional disorders, common childhood diseases, immunisation, medical problems of pregnancy, delivery and post-partum care. The training programmes were arranged to provide practical experience in taking and charting weights, identifying kwashiorkor, severe anaemia, gross vitamin A deficiency, and assessing the grade of malnutrition. The training consisted of simple explanations in the local dialect, and covered the jobs assigned to the workers."

Dr. Shah describes a typical day's work of the PTSW thus: "The PTSW leaves her home at 10.00 in the morning and visits the hamlets as per her time-table. She carries a shoulder-bag which accommodates the duplicate weight charts and cards of the under-sixes and women of the hamlets she is to visit that day, a weighing scale, a small spring balance, an adult portable scale once a month if there is a pregnant woman, the lists of 'at risk' children and pregnant women, index cards and medicines."

"She weighs all the child

ren, identifies the grade of nutrition by slipping the weight chart into a plastic overlay stencil which has multiple lines on it to indicate the various grades; decides whether nutrition supplements are needed; inquires about illness, particularly in 'at risk' children and women; administers medicines; talks to mothers about feeding, hygiene and child care. She inquires about the menstrual history of the women and enters it on their cards, records abortions, still-births and the state of pregnancy. She visits homes to see those who have not attended the 'clinic'.

"One day a week she distributes nutrition supplements in all the hamlets, and examines the children and women in only one hamlet. She meets with local leaders, and casually with traditional midwives and practitioners, but does not interfere with their management. If there is any serious case or acute illness, she reports it to the ANM or doctor. The ANM visits the PTSW's area twice a week and guides and supervises her work. A doctor visits the PTSW's village once in five weeks unless there is an emergency."



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## "REACHING THE UNREACHED CHILD!"

Continued from page 55

high as 600 in certain tribal areas — are those of children below five years of age. Therefore, if we really mean business about children's health and nutrition, we have got to concentrate on this segment of the population.

"This particular age-group is more prone to a number of diseases. Each child in this age-group has at least two to three attacks of diarrhoea per year. Respiratory and infectious diseases too hit them more frequently. Measles, whooping cough, tuberculosis, diphtheria, tetanus are their commonest menaces, though diphtheria and tetanus seem to be less so in recent times. As to nutrition, as much as 80 to 85 per cent of the child population below six years is malnourished, which means that we have about 100 million malnourished children to cope with. Iron-deficiency anaemia is also another great problem. So is infestation with different kinds of worms. Skin diseases like scabies are again more frequently seen in children.

"Another major problem generally overlooked by health authorities is that of handicapped children. As much as eight to ten per cent of our child population falls in this category, and yet we hardly think of them. In all, we have about 26 million handicapped children, and these include the mentally retarded, the blind, the deaf and dumb, the paralysed (due to polio, birth injury, cerebral palsy, etc.). Five per cent of our child population — about 13 million children — is blind. 42,000 children go blind every year. All this need not happen — the blindness is due to vitamin A deficiency and can be prevented. So can many of the other handicaps be prevented.

"What are the causes of the terrible situation of children's health and nutrition in India? Can we do anything to improve things? Obviously, the commonest cause is severe malnutrition, and in fact, one study conducted by us at Palghar with the help of the World Health Organisation revealed that as many as 50 per cent of the children there were severely malnourished. And of this group, just one-third were more than one month old, while the rest were newborns. Therefore, if I were to enumerate these problems, especially in rural and tribal India, I would put them in the following order: one, severe malnutrition; two, gastrointestinal diseases like diarrhoea; and three, infectious diseases like measles.

"Now that we have seen what the problems are like, let us consider what can be done. At the outset, I would like to point out

one important stumbling block. And that is — reaching the patient. We may manage to build a complete health infrastructure, but so long as it does not reach the patient, what function does it serve? Most of our doctors practise and preach from their ivory towers in the cities. Our health care system is geared around the hospital/clinic/dispensary approach — and you can't solve any of our health problems with such an approach, except those of the most influential groups of our society — only the cream. Nearly 67 per cent of all deaths in India are not attended by any medical person. And so are three-fourths of all illnesses in the country.

"Rural India is served by a system of Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and sub-centres — one PHC for a population of about 100,000 and one sub-centre for about 10,000. At the sub-centre, the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) is in charge of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) care services. Though most villages are in a five-km. radius from the sub-centre, there are many which may be as much as 40 km. away, especially in the hilly tribal areas. The ANM is expected to visit at least 12 villages every day. Antenatal care of mothers, and delivery of children in the remote areas is therefore left in the hands of 'dais', (traditional village midwives) who are untrained. And therefore we have a high incidence of birth injuries, infec-

tions like tetanus, etc., in rural areas. The maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rate are also very high.

"Some years ago, we initiated the Kasa tribal project (see box) and it was this project that taught us how to ensure that health care reached the hitherto unreachable child. The project also focussed our attention on unreachable mothers: rural working women who just cannot fit into the usual scheme of medical care — regular check-ups, follow-ups, etc. — because the time consumed (in travel alone, to and from the health centres) would mean an economic loss of as much as 40 per cent to their families.

"However, before we can begin tackling the paediatric problem on a much larger scale in India, we need to get our priorities right. With the coming of the International Year of the Child everybody's going to sing a different tune. In fact I've been given to understand that the IYC will concentrate on children's education. I can't see the point in trying to educate them if you can't first prevent them from dying before they become six years old. The worst-affected are tribal children, children in other rural areas, and those in urban slums. If all these can be reached, the International Year of the Child will have some significance. In fact, I think the motto of the IYC should be something like 'Reaching The Unreached Child!'"



One of the Kasa

## THE GIFTED CHILDREN

Continued from page 49

tors from Bombay, Ahmedabad, Jodhpur, Pilani and Delhi suggest a racket in the sale of NCERT scholarships.

In India there are only three special schools for younger children: (1) Navayug at New Delhi, inaugurated in 1973 under the auspices of the New Delhi Municipal Committee, (2) Jnana Prabodhini at Pune, functioning since 1962, and its branch in Bombay inaugurated in December 1975 but not fully operational, since it conducts only special classes for gifted children on Sundays, holidays and during vacations, and (3) the little-known Netarhat school in Bihar on which the Central government has published a report entitled: "An Experiment in the Promotion of Excellence."

Entrance to these select institutions is by special tests designed to evaluate the I.Q. of aspiring students, followed by an interview. Jnana Prabodhini of Pune claims to have formulated its own series of psychological tests for admission. But this institution lays heavy emphasis on science and technology and ignores the fields of fine arts and humanities. Navayug of New Delhi appears to have a more balanced approach, with well-equipped laboratories for science, geography and psychology, a Home Science Department as well as an Art Department proudly claiming that one of its students won the first prize in Shankar's International Painting Competition in 1977-78.

What is interesting is that both Navayug and Jnana Prabodhini offer the opportunity of a lifetime to children from economically weaker and under-privileged sections of society by financially supporting them in the secondary school stage. Jnana Prabodhini goes a step further by providing them gainful employment in one of its ten industrial and rural development activities after passing out.

When compared to efforts in the international sphere, the steps taken to provide special education for gifted children in India are like a drop in the ocean. The needs of a child as an individual were recognised in some countries as early as the 18th century. But in India the realisation came as late as the beginning of the 20th century. Again, education has always been sacrificed to more crisis-oriented programmes in the development of India after Independence. Nevertheless, a small beginning has been made. And in the coming International Year of the Child (1979), it is hoped that greater and more sustained attention will be given to this subject.

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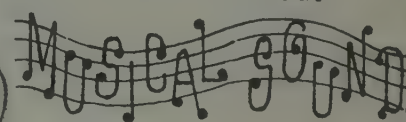
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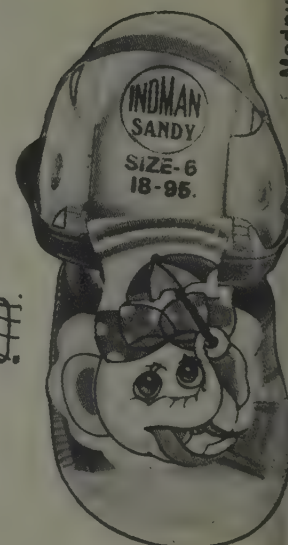
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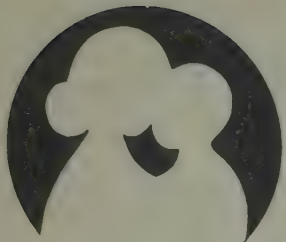
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## PART ONE Of A Four-Part Series On Personality Development In The Child

*'Parenting' is an  
important task and  
successful parenting  
helps the child to  
grow up as a  
spontaneous, creative,  
aware and  
intimate person*

Sarojini Welch



Prem Sagar

Recently I saw a mother donkey with a very cute foal grazing in our yard. I was tempted to touch and pet the baby. However, as soon as I moved close to it the mother darted at me. She was protecting her baby from a physical threat. Not too long ago, I had taken a mother with her daughter to Madras. The daughter had never been to a big city and never seen a double-deck bus before. As an empty bus stopped in front of us, the little girl asked her mother to go to the upper deck with her. The mother replied, "You can go by yourself; you are a big girl now." She was encouraging the child to be independent.

On an afternoon I have seen mothers and babies — occasionally a few fathers — crowding the hospital corridors. The parents bring the babies for immunisation shots, consultation with the doctor about their food and general well-being. These are the parents who also provide their children with warmth, shelter, love and feelings of security while the children are dependent on them, and help them gradually to move to independence. Parenting is an important task and successful parenting helps the child to grow up as a spontaneous and creative, aware and reactive, autonomous and intimate person.

I have met parents who tell me, "We have given everything to our son — good clothes, good food, plenty of toys, and yet we do not know where he went wrong. At home he is withdrawn, does not study in school, spends money irresponsibly with his friends. Where did we go wrong?" A mother comes with a complaint, "I love my daughter very

much but she hates me and does not listen to me. What did I do wrong with her?"

Being in the field of psychotherapy, it is my belief that parent-child relations and child-rearing practices play an important part in the moulding of the life of a child, particularly in the first six years of his life. Working primarily with a conceptual frame of reference of Transactional Analysis (T.A.), it is my belief that all children are born psychologically O.K. until their parents or parent substitutes give them messages contrary to this O.K.-ness and the children make a conscious decision as to how they are going to be. In this series of articles, I will discuss the personality structure and functioning as conceptualized in T.A. and then trace the developmental stages from infancy to six years of age, the effect of the parental messages and the child's decisions

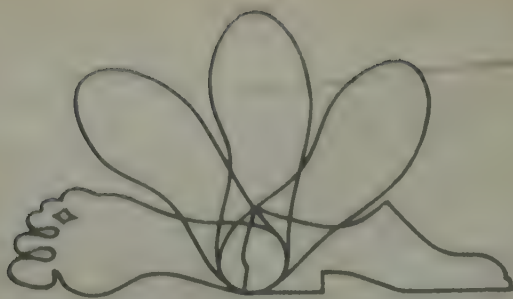
in relation to the verbal and non-verbal messages. I will also discuss some basic principles to be considered by parents or parent substitutes that will lead to healthy child-rearing practices.

Transactional Analysis is a theory of personality structure and social behaviour originated and developed by Eric Berne and his associates in 1954. Berne perceived that spontaneous social activity reveals that from time to time people show noticeable changes in posture, viewpoint, voice, vocabulary and other aspects of behaviour. These behavioural changes are often accompanied by shifts in feelings, and these he called Ego States. Ego states in a person are coherent systems of feelings expressed in a corresponding set of behaviour. Each one of us has a structure with three ego states regardless of our age. Our energy flows from one ego state to another, depending on the integra-

# THE WELL-ADJUSTED CHILD



tion of the internal and external experiences in a functional way. The Parent (P) Ego State is what we learned and copied from our parents or parent substitutes. (The letters are capitalized for ego states and not for persons.) One side of P is called the Critical or Controlling Parent (CP) concerned with disciplining and limiting. When we function from CP we use words such as "do", "must", "have to", "ought", "should" and the opposite of these such as "don't", "must not", "ought not", etc. We also use "always", "never", "you fool", and "stupid". The tone of voice may be loud, eyebrows raised, finger pointing toward another person and shaking. The facial muscles may be drawn and tight. We are not always critical or controlling in the P. Sometimes, we are caring, nurturing, concerned, tender and loving. This is the other primary function of P called the Nurturing Parent (NP). In the Parent Ego State we generally function on the basis of our values, opinions and beliefs. The Adult (A) in us is like a computer, dealing with facts, analyzing, processing data, making predictions. We say: "This wall is fourteen feet high, eight feet wide and eight inches thick. It is painted green and has a picture hanging on it." In this process we have basically described reality which is the primary function of the Adult Ego State. In the Child (C) Ego State we are spontaneous, carefree, imaginative and fun-loving. We have childlike expressions such as "wow", "nice", "great" etc. We jump, clap, dance and sing. This is the Free Child (FC). The other primary function of the C is adapted either compliant or



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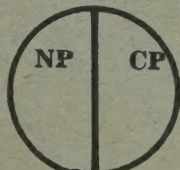
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## THE WELL-ADJUSTED CHILD

rebellious, angry, guilty, sad, inadequate, etc. In the Child Ego State we generally have feelings. The following diagram shows our structure. Through this structure we function in the behavioural patterns described above.

### EGO STATES

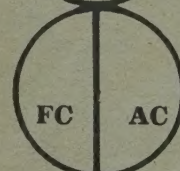
You will be all right (NP)



You should not touch my doll (CP)

The time now is 1.30 p.m (A)

Wow! the rainbow is beautiful (FC)



I feel guilty about not doing my homework (AC)

does good work we say, "Good boy, you have done well." This is a conditional positive stroke which we give for doing, achieving, and complying. Unconditional strokes are given for being. When a mother tells a child: "I love you, you are wonderful", she is giving him an unconditional positive stroke. With this message the child may have a basic position: "I am O.K. and you are O.K." and may decide to live with zest, giving positive strokes



Prem Sagar

A child under six has this basic structure. For example, when in CP, a little girl shakes her finger at her younger brother and shouts, "Why did you break my doll? You should not have touched it, stupid", she has copied this behaviour from her parents when they scolded her for touching other people's things. The same little girl may then move into her NP, pick up the doll, and say lovingly, "My poor baby. You will be all right. I will take care of you." When functioning from her Adult Ego State a child would give factual information: "My doll has been broken by my brother." In the Adapted Child, the little girl wonders if it is the right time to go and ask her father to repair the doll. After he has repaired it she gives him a big kiss of joy and is functioning in her Free Child. The above illustrations show that our energy flows and we function from all these ego states from time to time. In specific situations we may function more in one ego state than another; however, in order to be a balanced person we need to function from all three alike in a general way. The formula for this kind of functioning then is:  $(P+A+C) MM=C$ .  
(— — —)  
(3 3 3)

C stands for a constant of energy, MM symbolizes mother's milk, which is essential for the growth of the child, physical as well as psychological. This we get from strokes which are important in everyone's life. Strokes are ways of validating and recognizing people or not doing so. There are four basic types of strokes. When a child obeys and

to others. If a child does not get enough positive strokes, he may adapt negative behaviour to get negative strokes. Negative strokes are of two types. One is conditional negative stroke in which the child is condemned for unacceptable behaviour. For example, parents who do not ask the child how school is, who his friends are or what the teacher taught that day, and thus do not give him positive strokes, often get notes from the teacher saying that the child is weak or has not done his homework. Then the parents scold him for what he has done or not done. This is a conditional negative stroke for doing or not doing. Sometimes, in a home where the father is away or too involved in his job, and the mother is busy and frustrated, a child may get a verbal or non-verbal message of "Don't be" by expressions such as "Get out of here", "Don't bother me", "Leave me alone", etc. This is an unconditional negative stroke. The child may have a basic position of "I am not O.K. and others are not O.K." He may decide not to be and some day run away or commit suicide. It is very important that the parents give positive strokes to children, physical as well as verbal. We all and specially children, need to be held and stroked physically and psychologically. A balance of the three ego states, as well as mother's milk symbolizing physical and psychological nourishment, is essential for the development of the child; so that he gets Parental messages of values, opinions and beliefs that are life supporting. Adult information and permission to think and Child permission to feel and ex-

press his feelings appropriately and feel O.K.

With the above awareness and understanding of the ego state functioning in people, we shall now proceed to look at the development and relationships of a child. We are not born with these ego states. We develop them as we grow. According to Transactional Analysis, there are two basic components of a development experience. These are the perceptions of the child of messages transmitted by parenting persons and the child's basic decisions made in response to those perceived messages. If he does not get what he wants before he is six years old, he continues to seek it symbolically in the here and now. He writes a script and plays out the role in the drama of life according to the decisions he makes as a child. He has patterns of thinking, behaving and feeling now which he developed before he was six years old. For example, a doctor who treated hundreds of patients remained shy and withdrawn. He examined a patient asking the minimum number of questions, did not look the patient in the eye and became irritable if the relatives asked questions. At parties, he withdrew in a corner and did not communicate with the guests. With strangers he felt distant and remained quiet. On investigation, he became aware of an experience when he was five years old, when some guests had come to visit his parents. He was in the living room playing, making a noise and distracting. His mother told him to either be quiet or go outside and play. At that moment

he made a decision in order to stay in the room: "I will be quiet. When I grow up I will be quiet, shy and withdrawn in company. I will not bother people." This doctor perceived in therapy that he was continuing to behave according to his early childhood decision.

Another example is of a child, Suresh, who remained close to his ayah the first two days of school. When the ayah was asked not to come any more, he cried and fussed and then stuck to the teacher while the other children got into the various school activities. He remained passive until the teacher told him what to do. He did not ask for anything and waited till someone else anticipated his need and met it for him. On investigation the teacher discovered that the message Suresh got from his parents and elder siblings (he was the youngest) was, "Don't grow up." The parents may not have said "Stay Little". However, by doing everything for Suresh, anticipating his needs, making his decisions, keeping him close, they gave him a non-verbal message. Suresh made a decision: "I will remain passive and little and get what I want." When he went to school, he carried out the pattern until the teacher recognized it as pathological and helped him to grow up by insisting that he was supposed to think of his needs and ask for these. By so doing he decided to grow up.

The above two illustrations describe the process known in Transactional Analysis as life script development.

To be continued

Continued from page 33

should be women's endeavour, to examine how they rear their children and how they can ensure that they bring up their boys with the same duties and disciplines that they expect from their girls. Furthermore, it should be the task of women's organizations to get this message through to mothers at every level of society. Women, by their self-sacrifice and discipline, have been a major factor for stability in our society from ancient times. Today they need to implant these same values in their sons, for only then would we have a society based on honest endeavour instead of the one we have today, based on privilege and favours.

If one were to sum up in very simple terms the essence of a child's needs, they would be food, love, security, protection against disease and a fair chance to learn in order to earn.

For the child is the father of the man. What is provided at each stage of a child's development will determine what sort of man he will become. If a plant needs water and nutrients from time to time, enough sunlight and proper care, how much more important are the same elements needed with regard to a child. Yet the piecemeal programmes on which we have spent public finances indicate that planners must believe children can grow to adulthood if

services here and there are provided, but not all services at each stage of the child's development.

It is significant that when Parliament finally approved the National Policy for Children in 1975, a clause, which we in the Indian Council for Child Wel-

fare considered extremely important, was simply eliminated. This clause read: "The unwanted child should not be born." It is at this point that population control and action against irresponsible parenthood becomes most important. Parents who procreate but cannot and

sometimes will not give children the barest essentials of life, throw upon society hordes of unwanted children. It is a marvel how such children survive against all known notions of nutrition, sanitation and child care. Yet there are several million such children. Some are cared for by welfare agencies, municipalities and the State. Hundreds of others drift into petty trades, semi-bondage and delinquency. How can we as a society condone this wilful infliction of a sub-life on children when to prevent such a child being born would have been so much easier? There is a moral element to this. Much of society today talks about dharma and right action. Yet these same sanctimonious people turn a blind eye to mortal injury done to a child through no fault of its own. Would it be impossible to launch a movement in the Children's Year to haul up irresponsible parents who allow their small children to migrate to cities in search of work, or who abandon them cruelly in fairs, trains and in the slums?

The plans for the Children's Year all over the world are as varied as the countries themselves. In India, it must be our special concern to right the wrongs against children where we know these wrongs exist, and it must be made a moral question for which the adult is made answerable. Is this your child? Can you give it food, love, security, protection against disease and a chance to grow? If not, that child should not have been born.

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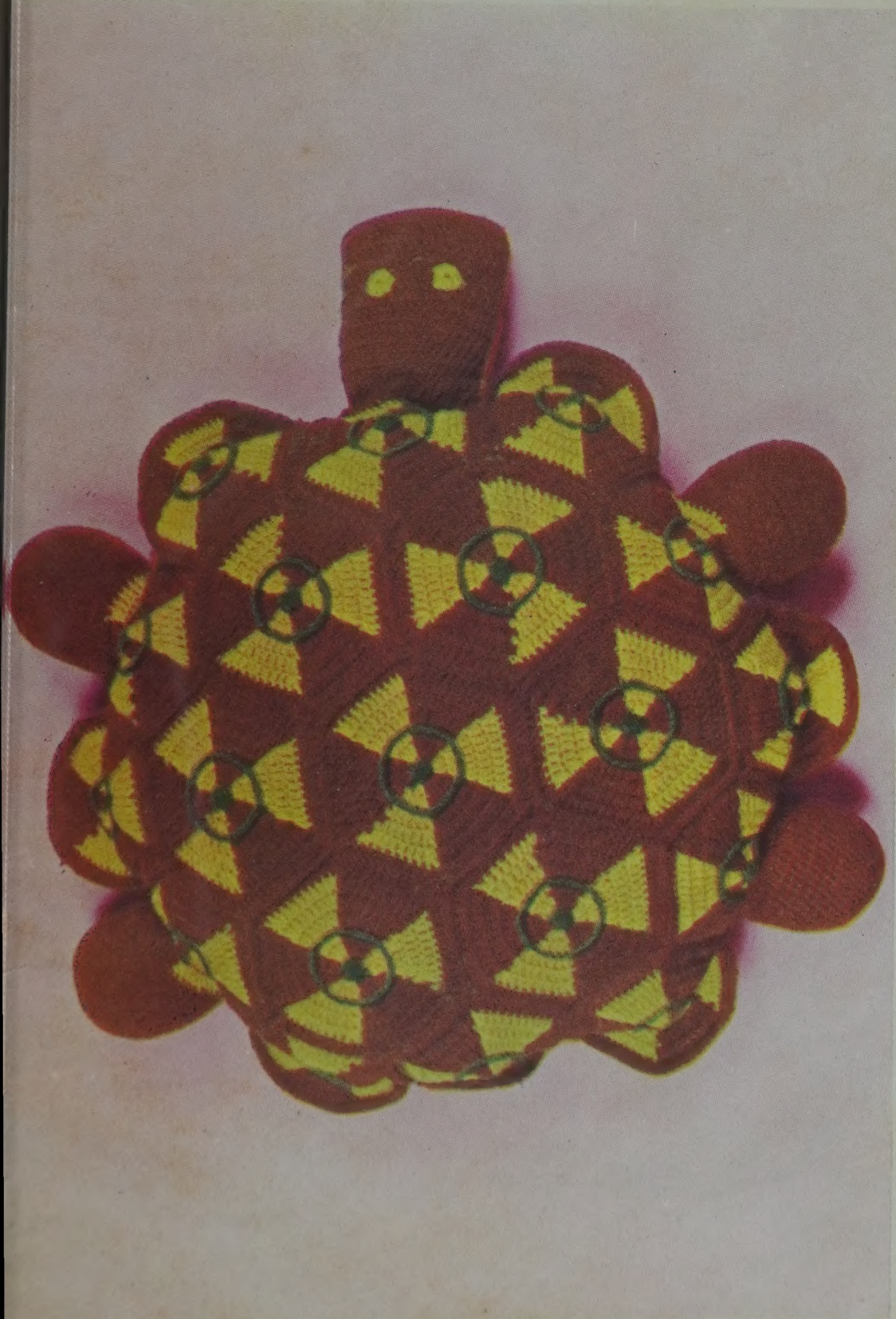
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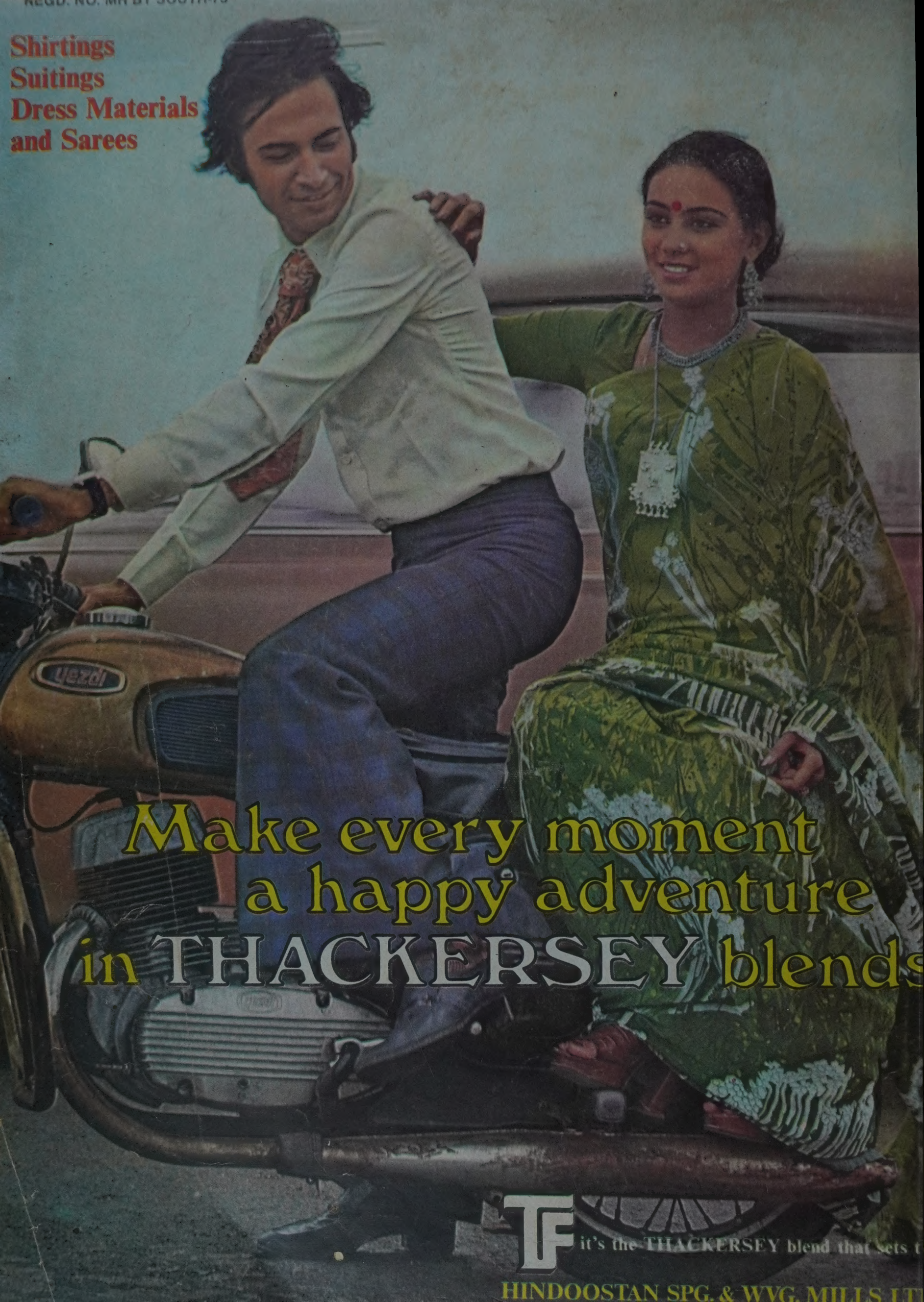
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